



POSITION IMPROVEMENT GUIDE

FOR CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS
IN SECONDARY SCHOOL
ATHLETICS PROGRAMS

**POSITION IMPROVEMENT GUIDE FOR
CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS
IN SECONDARY SCHOOL ATHLETICS PROGRAMS**

National Athletic Trainers' Association

Secondary School Athletic Trainers' Committee

Larry Cooper, MS, LAT ATC, Chair
Lori Johannessen ATC, LAT
Dan Quigley, MEd, ATC, LAT
David McAllister, MAEd, ATC, LAT
Troy Hoehn, ATC, ATR, CSCS
Ronnie Harper, Ed.D, ATC
Bart Peterson, MSS, ATC/L, NATA BOD Liaison

Troy Hoehn, ATC, ATR, CSCS
Dan Newman MS, ATC, LAT
Kembra Mathis, MEd, ATC, LAT
Dominic L. Di Manna, M. Ed, MS, ATC-R
Stacey J. Ritter, MS, ATC
Christopher Dean, ATC
Russell Lowe, NATA Staff Liaison

2013

Table of Contents

Introductory Letter	3
Chapter One – Determining Your Focus	4
Chapter Two – Assessing the Situation	9
Chapter Three – Working Within the School System	23
Chapter Four – Changing Your Employment Model	26
Chapter Five – Understanding Contracts and Negotiations	29
Chapter Six – Improving Your Bottom Line	36
Chapter Seven – Increasing Your Budget	39
Chapter Eight – Improving Your Facility	42
Chapter Nine – Increasing Your Athletic Training Staff	44
Chapter Ten – Improving Communication	50
Chapter Eleven – Improving Time Management	55
Chapter Twelve – Improving Policies and Procedures	58
Chapter Thirteen – Recruiting and Maintaining Quality Team Physicians	64
Appendix A – Sample Proposal for Change in AT Program	67
Appendix B – Sample Position Descriptions	68
Athletic Trainer	68
Athletic Trainer / Educator	69
Appendix C – Athletic Trainer Evaluation Samples	71
Head Athletic Trainer Evaluation Form	71
Assistant Athletic Trainer Evaluation Form	75
Appendix D – Sample Communications	79
Athletic Training Room Rules	79
Criteria for Lettering in Athletic Training	80
Head Injury Care	81
Immediate Injury Care	82
Appendix E – Sample Policies and Procedures	83
Appendix F – Sample Proposals for Additional Staff	87
Appendix G – Bibliography	96

Introductory Letter

Dear Secondary School Athletic Trainer:

The NATA Secondary School Athletic Trainers' Committee provides this document to assist AT's interested in improving their current employment situation. While we have not addressed every possible scenario in this document, we have attempted to provide a general overview of common situations that have been identified as problems.

As you read through this document, there may be information that you think is not specific to your particular employment situation. However, we believe that it is important to address any situation or condition you might like to improve as a long-range project, with the understanding that change often takes the slow road to fruition. Planting the seeds of ideas within the many decision-makers in a school system is essential. When "professional persistence" is incorporated, your goals can be achieved.

Remember, essential components for improving an AT's employment situation include the following:

Perception. The community, school administration, coaching staff, parents, local medical providers and student athletes must perceive the AT as a professional health care provider.

Accountability. The AT must be accountable for the work s/he currently provides (i.e., professional record keeping, documentation, position statements, EAP's and SOP's)

Improved care. The AT must identify how proposed changes would improve the care provided to the student athletes, the school community, etc.

Budget consciousness. The AT must be realistic in proposing changes that will fit into the current or future budget of the school system or should identify alternatives.

The process of requesting change is not easy and this Position Improvement Guide is not intended to be a shortcut. It is provided to improve your chances of success when requesting a change. It will still be hard work, but with persistence, a professional attitude, proper planning and a little luck, you will have the best chance for success.

We wish you much success in your endeavors.

Sincerely,

NATA Secondary School Athletic Trainers' Committee

Chapter One – Determining Your Focus

When the Secondary School Athletic Trainers' Committee initially published the *Position Proposal Guide for the Secondary School Athletic Trainer* (PPG) (Almquist, et.al. 1998), we discovered that much of the information included in that document could assist those already employed in the secondary school setting. Many ATs were using the PPG to improve their current employment situation and requested additional help. As we met and tried to determine the most effective method to assist in affecting change, we decided that the best way is to determine what changes are needed and then offer solutions and guidelines for making those changes. In this first section, we hope to help you determine your focus.

The Appropriate Medical Care for the Secondary School-Aged Athlete Task Force Consensus Statement describes a secondary school athletic training program as one that has a designated individual who has specialized knowledge in and is qualified to accomplish the following:

- Determine an individual's readiness to participate in physical activity.
- Promote safe and appropriate practice, competition and treatment facilities.
- Advise on the selection, fit, function and maintenance of athletic equipment.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive emergency action plan.
- Establish protocols regarding environmental conditions.
- Develop injury and illness prevention strategies.
- Provide for on-site recognition, evaluation and immediate treatment of injury and illness, with appropriate referrals.
- Facilitate rehabilitation and reconditioning.
- Provide for psychosocial consultation and referral.
- Provide scientifically sound nutritional counseling and education.
- Participate in the development and implementation of a comprehensive athletic health care administrative system (e.g. personal health information, policies and procedures, insurance, referrals, and record keeping).

Five Steps to Improve Your Situation

We encourage you to evaluate your school's athletic training program using the following five-step rubric in an effort to assess areas that require improvement within your practice. You may also incorporate any other techniques that you determine necessary to evaluate your ability to provide an appropriate athletic training program as defined above by the *Consensus Statement*.

Step 1: Determine the Ideal Situation

Determine all aspects that you consider to be components of your ideal situation so that improvement efforts are not duplicated. What are the details of the optimal program? Does your ideal situation fall within the legal realm of athletic training in your state? Some state statutes may allow or disallow many of the different skills and competencies involved in the practice of athletic training. Ensure that your identified goals are legal in your state.

You should be able to identify a list of items you would like to be addressed and changed. Many of them may be accomplished without much effort or without administrative approval. All you have to do is apply yourself. What improvements can be achieved easily? What improvements can be achieved with more effort? There may be some things that may be great additions or changes to your program, but due to any number of

reasons (state laws, district or school policies and procedures, or perhaps just poor timing or a lack of funding), which may be unachievable at the moment.

Does your ideal situation involve appropriate coverage or appropriate care?

An area to focus on is the concept of **COVERAGE** versus **CARE**. **Coverage** is what we do when we establish policies and procedures to ensure that we are available as needed to all sports, teams, and participants on an equitable basis. **Coverage** is a matter of being there and reacting to the needs on an immediate basis.

Care is what we do when we practice the art and science of athletic training. Athletic trainers do not just tape, ice, or sit in a golf cart. Anyone can do that! Athletic trainers provide valuable healthcare. We evaluate, rehabilitate, treat, assess, counsel, and educate, and are qualified to perform a variety of other roles for the student athlete.

We need to get away from the paradigm of providing **coverage**, and instead focus on providing **care**. In fact, if you look through the Role Delineation Study from any year of publication, you will find that the document does not say we should provide coverage.

Step 2: Evaluate Your Current Situation

Are the changes you want to make possible within the framework of your current job description? Each job description is written independently. Do you know what your job description does and does not allow you to do? It may be possible to make certain changes or modifications simply by changing components or wording of your job description. Changes can occur as easy as adhering to a change with support from your immediate supervisor or administrator.

Can you change your job description?

What is the process for job description change in your school system? In many school systems, there are procedures for changing job descriptions; you need to know (and follow) those procedures. See previous paragraph.

What changes can be made within your current job description?

If you cannot change the job description easily or immediately, what changes can you make that stay within the current job description? This may be the place to start. Eventually others within your school or district will see your desire to improve your program and making any future changes to the job description may become easier.

Does your institution have the capability to meet your ideal situation?

Are the changes you would like to make possible within the school system? We all have that idealistic view about our current situation and our ability to make change. However, there are some instances where the best change you can make is your employer. If necessary change is not possible at your current place of employment, serious consideration should be given to changing to another employer to effect the desired changes.

What would you settle for? What would you not settle for?

Compromise is an essential part of working within a bureaucracy. School systems are built in layers and you may have to make concessions to obtain the desired changes. What is it that you are willing to settle for? Prioritize your recommendations for improvement and change.

What have you done or been doing to justify the desired changes to your superiors?

As an AT you have been hired to provide healthcare services to your patients and athletes. Your employer expects you to do your utmost to protect the health and lives of those in which their care you have been entrusted. Often, school-based administrators and coaches have impressions about what the AT can and should provide to the school's student athletes. That impression can range from: simply taping ankles and applying ice; to the coordination and implementation of athletic training services that encompass a wide spectrum of duties and responsibilities. What SHOULD you provide? What DO you currently provide?

There are also certain characteristics that administrators look for in an employee. Namely, do **you** identify solutions instead of just problems? Are you proactive in your approach? Do you do your work? Are you punctual? Positive responses to these questions are just the start to ensure that your coworkers and supervisors are behind you in your quest for improvement.

Step 3: Develop a Plan

Determining your focus is the basis for the future.

If you perform an honest and thorough evaluation, you will identify those areas that need the most work.

Imagine performing a fitness analysis and body composition test on an athlete. First we take pictures from all angles, then we perform a caliper test on selected sites and, finally, we perform some cardiovascular, strength and flexibility testing. If we allow the athlete to choose the areas that are tested and they choose their strongest areas, then we fail to find their weakest points. These weakest points are what we need to address, not avoid.

Often problem areas are right in front of our eyes. Do your coaches always complain about something in particular? Is your administration always late in communicating a change or an expectation? These issues should be addressed first. However, just as in medicine, make sure you identify the underlying cause of the problem. Do not just treat the symptoms!

After you have determined your area(s) of focus, formulate a plan. Talk to individuals whose opinions and input you trust. Identify those who may have already gone through this process and get their suggestions. Sit down with your supervisor; let him or her know that you would like to improve in this area and get his/her suggestions. Many times help in making the change will be offered.

However, try to anticipate setbacks, as well as solutions. Anticipate being told "no" at least once (possibly 100 times or more). Also anticipate succeeding, but do not get frustrated if you do not accomplish everything you wanted to achieve. Remember to set goals and standards for success, and use these to help evaluate your progress.

Prioritize your plan.

As you formulate your plan, identify those things that must be achieved, those things that could be achieved, and those things that it would be nice to achieve but are not absolutely necessary ("dream/wish" list). Once you have identified the aspects of your program you wish to change, prioritize these items from most to least important. Take into consideration the necessity of the item as well as the degree of difficulty in achieving that particular goal. You may also want to consider the cost of achieving each of the

desired items. Just because a school can afford it, does not mean you are entitled to the Taj Mahal of athletic training rooms or to be paid like a king. It may be better to try to achieve several smaller, more affordable items than one large, more expensive one. Finally, prioritize your plan based on long and short term goals. Some items may be fairly easily achieved and can be done so in a relatively short time frame. Other items may require more planning, time, or money to be implemented effectively.

Step 4: Implement the Plan

After your detailed plan is finalized, implement it.

Be ready for setbacks and difficulty. Remember, if it does not hurt at least a little bit, it probably is not worth fixing, so keep it up. Make sure your support team (administration, coaches, parents or whomever you have used to help identify the problem and the solution) knows what the plan is and whether they have a role in the solution. You will be amazed at how many people are willing to help when they see your desire to improve the quality of services you provide. Avoid surprising any group impacted by your plan. Keep everyone informed and assess their support.

The hardest part of any endeavor is beginning. Getting up the courage to begin change is ultimately up to each of us and requires honesty. Imagine trying to pull a train engine down the tracks. If we can just get it going, momentum will help us achieve our goals. After you have started, it takes much less effort to keep the train rolling; just make sure it is rolling in the right direction. Keep the momentum, and DON'T QUIT - sometimes change takes the slow road.

Step 5: Evaluate the Outcome and Try Again, if Necessary

Once the plan is complete, evaluate the results. Are the results what you expected? Was it harder than you anticipated? What setbacks did you not see before they hit you? Have the changes improved your position? Why did you start this whole process? Did it help you improve yourself as a professional?

Using the same tools you are provided in later chapters, evaluate your program or situation again to see if improvements have been made. At the same time, you will identify additional areas that require your attention. After a short break for a breath, start all over again.

Things to Consider:

Excuses Everyone can come up with excuses for not doing something. We only do those things we want to do. Benjamin Franklin once said "He that is good at making excuses is seldom good for anything else." Don't let excuses get in the way of achieving your goals.

The Power of Persuasion This document should be used to assist you in working with the administration, not against them. Use the administration as a sounding board and as a means to help you fix YOUR problem. They will be much more willing to help than if you use this to FORCE them to change something.

Survey Surrounding Schools (Rural versus Urban) Make sure you find out what others are doing in similar circumstances. If no one else around you is doing what you propose, you may have a more difficult time convincing your support team that it is necessary. But remember, just because no one else is doing it does not mean it should not be done. Stick to your guns. If you are doing the right thing, others will follow you. Don't be afraid

to be the first to try something.

Use the statistics of similar and nearby schools if they favor your position. If their information is not favorable, it may be because their demographics do not match those of your school or their tax base is not the same and you can eliminate their data. If the information for a dissimilar school does favor you, you might be able to use it if you can minimize the differences between schools and school systems.

Problems versus Solutions Administrators tend to respond better to questions being asked and solutions proposed than to just problems being presented. After you have identified your problem area(s), determine your solutions before you hit the administration with the problem. The word "solutions" in the preceding sentence is plural for a reason. In this way, you are giving them a choice between two (or more) viable solutions to the problem. Remember to have your proposed solutions well thought out and consider the impact your solution has on other areas of the school system.

Chapter One Notes:

Chapter Two – Assessing the Situation

This is the method you will use to document the suspicions you have about your program; we all have an idea of areas that need improvement. The following two evaluations will document the needs of your athletic program.

Self-Evaluation

The AT should complete this survey of his/her program. This survey is the method used to determine where you should focus your efforts in improving your position. Sections provided later in the Position Improvement Guide provide the AT with the tools needed to use to improve the area identified through this survey.

I. Governing Administrative Policies and Procedures

Athletic Health Care Personnel

- | | | |
|---|---------|--------|
| 1. NATA Certified/ Licensed Athletic Trainers employed full-time? | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| 2. NATA Certified/ Licensed Athletic Trainers employed part-time? | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| 3. AT contracted through physical therapy clinic or hospital/other? | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| 4. Coach, teacher, or other staff member performs medical duties? | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| 5. Other (PT, EMT, DC, RN, etc.) | Yes ___ | No ___ |

Job Responsibilities

- | | | |
|---|---------|--------|
| 1. Written job descriptions define the responsibilities and legal duties of: | | |
| Certified/Licensed athletic trainer (or comparable staff member) | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| Athletic administrator | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| Coaches | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| 2. Athletic trainer's responsibilities to specific groups of students defined in job description and consistent with state law. | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| 3. Does an athletic trainer or other health care professional provide athletic health care: | | |
| Full-time daily | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| Afternoons only | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| Game coverage only | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| 4. Do you have a team physician? | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| 5. Sports Participation Requirements | | |
| Pre-participation medical evaluation required as per state athletic and/or state education association guidelines. | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| 6. Pre-participation evaluation includes: | | |
| Medical history | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| Physical examination | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| Medical authorization for participation | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| Concussion Baseline Testing | Yes ___ | No ___ |
| 7. Format/content of medical examination meets accepted standards as per state athletic and or state education association guidelines | Yes ___ | No ___ |

8. Medical examination conducted by: (check all that apply)

Yes ___ No ___	MD or DO
Yes ___ No ___	Physician's assistant
Yes ___ No ___	Nurse practitioner
Yes ___ No ___	Doctor of chiropractic

9. Student-athletes/parents required to provide "informed consent or acknowledgement of risk" for participation. (Concussion information sheet may be required according to state law.)

Yes ___ No ___

10. Emergency information card required

Yes ___ No ___

11. Emergency information card includes:

List of student's allergies	Yes ___	No ___
Parent / guardian home or cell phone number	Yes ___	No ___
Parent / guardian work telephone number	Yes ___	No ___
Parent /guardian consent for emergency medical treatment	Yes ___	No ___
Hospital preferences	Yes ___	No ___
Comprehensive medical insurance required	Yes ___	No ___

12. Appropriate forms and records submitted and on file before first practice (all sports):

Medical history/examination	Yes ___	No ___
Informed consent or acknowledgment	Yes ___	No ___
Verification of medical insurance	Yes ___	No ___
Emergency information card	Yes ___	No ___
Concussion Informed Consent/Information Sheet	Yes ___	No ___

13. Staff member who reviews and organizes records:

Athletic trainer	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic director (secretary)	Yes ___	No ___
Activities director (secretary)	Yes ___	No ___
School Nurse	Yes ___	No ___
Other	Yes ___	No ___

II. Emergency Care Preparedness

A. Emergency care personnel

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation/Defibrillator (CPR/AED) training required of:

Athletic trainer	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic administrators	Yes ___	No ___
Coaches (all sports)	Yes ___	No ___

Basic first aid (e.g., American Red Cross, American Heart Association) required of:

Athletic trainer(s)	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic administrators	Yes ___	No ___
Coaches (all sports)	Yes ___	No ___

Concussion training (per state law) required of:

Athletic Trainers	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic administrators	Yes ___	No ___
Coaches (all sports)	Yes ___	No ___
Teachers	Yes ___	No ___
Parents/Athletes	Yes ___	No ___

B. Emergency care (EAP) in-service training

Regular emergency care in-service training sessions held for:

Athletic administrators	Yes ___	No ___
Coaches (all sports)	Yes ___	No ___

Emergency care (EAP) in-service training sessions include policies/ procedures for:

Compliance with legal duties and responsibilities	Yes ___	No ___
Use of emergency transportation	Yes ___	No ___
Securing emergency transportation (e.g., 911 calls)	Yes ___	No ___
General management of emergency situations	Yes ___	No ___
Emergency management of specific injuries/illnesses (e.g., neck injuries, heat illness, concussions, etc.)	Yes ___	No ___
Notification of parents/guardians	Yes ___	No ___
Completion and submission of accident reports	Yes ___	No ___
Media Response (administration)	Yes ___	No ___

Emergency care in-service training sessions held:

Quarterly	Yes ___	No ___
Semiannually	Yes ___	No ___
Annually	Yes ___	No ___
Biannually	Yes ___	No ___

C. Emergency/acute health care equipment

Emergency equipment available AND in good repair:

AED (automated external defibrillator)	Yes ___	No ___
Vacuum splints (or appropriate alternative)	Yes ___	No ___
Long spine board	Yes ___	No ___
Hard neck collars (Philadelphia collars)	Yes ___	No ___
Face mask removal equipment (e.g., Trainer's Angels,)	Yes ___	No ___
Resuscitation mask	Yes ___	No ___
Shoulder immobilizers	Yes ___	No ___
Blankets	Yes ___	No ___
Crutches	Yes ___	No ___
Blood pressure cuff	Yes ___	No ___
Stethoscope	Yes ___	No ___
Latex gloves	Yes ___	No ___
First aid kit	Yes ___	No ___
Immersion tub	Yes ___	No ___

Emergency equipment readily accessible during all practices and games to:

Athletic trainers	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic administrators	Yes ___	No ___
Coaches (all sports)	Yes ___	No ___

Staff member(s) responsible for emergency care trained in the use of all emergency care equipment available

Yes ___	No ___
---------	--------

D. Communication system/emergency transportation

Telephone/direct outside line accessible during all practices and games to:

Athletic trainers	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic administrators	Yes ___	No ___
Coaches (all sports)	Yes ___	No ___

Emergency telephone numbers posted by telephone

Yes ___	No ___
---------	--------

Information to be given during emergency telephone calls posted by telephone

Yes ___	No ___
---------	--------

Emergency telephone numbers and information (e.g., on wallet-sized cards) issued to:

Athletic trainers	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic administrators	Yes ___	No ___
Coaches (all sports)	Yes ___	No ___

Keys for all gates and doors necessary for emergency transportation accessibility to all playing fields and playing areas are distributed to:

Athletic trainers	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic administrators	Yes ___	No ___
Coaches (all sports)	Yes ___	No ___

Emergency (EAP) information cards accessible during all practices and games (home and away) to:

Athletic trainers	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic administrators	Yes ___	No ___
Coaches (all sports)	Yes ___	No ___

Written policies/procedures established for securing emergency transportation (e.g., 911 call) for both practices and (home) games

Yes ___	No ___
---------	--------

Written policy established for notification of parents and school administrators for serious injuries

Yes ___	No ___
---------	--------

E. Accident reports

Appropriate accident report forms available:

Athletic injury report	Yes ___	No ___
Standard (school) accident report	Yes ___	No ___

Policies/procedures established for competing and submitting accident reports	Yes ___	No ___
Criteria established for "reportable injury" ("time loss" vs "non-time loss")	Yes ___	No ___
Staff member responsible for filling out and filing reports:		
Coach	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic trainer(s)	Yes ___	No ___
Administrator	Yes ___	No ___
Other (School Nurse, etc.)	Yes ___	No ___

III. Injury management protocol and procedures

A. *Records/record keeping*

Forms established for maintaining records regarding:		
Initial assessment	Yes ___	No ___
Referrals to physicians	Yes ___	No ___
Daily treatments (e.g., cold, heat, tape)	Yes ___	No ___
Injury rehabilitation	Yes ___	No ___
Format/content of forms meet accepted standards (e.g., content, information recorded)	Yes ___	No ___
Initial assessment	Yes ___	No ___
Referrals to physicians	Yes ___	No ___
Daily treatments (e.g., cold, heat, tape)	Yes ___	No ___
Injury rehabilitation	Yes ___	No ___
Concussion baseline & incidence tracking	Yes ___	No ___

B. *Medical Referral*

Protocol/procedures established for referral of injured/ill student athletes to physicians	Yes ___	No ___
Follow-up treatment is given under the direction of the physician	Yes ___	No ___
Policy of written medical release from an MD/DO (PAC, ARNP) required for return to sports participation (following an injury) established	Yes ___	No ___
Return to sport participation typically determined by:		
MD or DO	Yes ___	No ___
Athletic trainer	Yes ___	No ___
Coach	Yes ___	No ___
Nurse	Yes ___	No ___
Other (PA, ARNP, DC, PT)	Yes ___	No ___

IV. Training room facilities and operation

A. *Facilities/equipment*

Adequate space available for:		
Pre-practice/event preparation (e.g., taping and wrapping)	Yes ___	No ___
Therapeutic management (e.g., treatment tables, modalities)	Yes ___	No ___
Injury Evaluation & Treatment	Yes ___	No ___
Injury rehabilitation	Yes ___	No ___
Administrative functions (e.g., desk, file cabinets, computer)	Yes ___	No ___

Basic administrative/injury management equipment available:

Desk/chair	Yes ___	No ___
Phone (land-line and cellular)	Yes ___	No ___
Computer (laptop, tablet) w/ internet access	Yes ___	No ___
Injury Tracking Software (EMR)	Yes ___	No ___
Concussion Management Software	Yes ___	No ___
File cabinet	Yes ___	No ___
Ice machine	Yes ___	No ___
Refrigerator	Yes ___	No ___
Sink/hand washing facilities	Yes ___	No ___
Whirlpools	Yes ___	No ___
Heat packs	Yes ___	No ___
Treatment/taping tables	Yes ___	No ___
Storage cabinets (for tape, gauze, wraps, etc.)	Yes ___	No ___

Basic injury rehabilitation equipment available:

Leg exercise device (e.g., leg press, extension machine)	Yes ___	No ___
Shoulder exercise device (e.g., wall pulley)	Yes ___	No ___
Free weights (e.g., dumbbells and weight cuffs)	Yes ___	No ___
Rubber tubing (e.g., elastic tubing)	Yes ___	No ___
Proprioceptive devices (e.g., wobble board, slide board, etc.)	Yes ___	No ___
Cardiovascular training equipment (e.g., stationary bicycle, stair climber, etc.)	Yes ___	No ___

B. Control of risk factors

Training room "risk factors" controlled regarding:

Electrical safety (e.g., ground fault interrupters)	Yes ___	No ___
Daily sanitation/cleanliness (e.g., floor and surfaces)	Yes ___	No ___
Maintenance of therapeutic modalities	Yes ___	No ___
Maintenance of rehabilitation exercise equipment	Yes ___	No ___
Controlled access to training room	Yes ___	No ___
Controlled access to storage room/cabinets	Yes ___	No ___
Ventilation/air conditioning	Yes ___	No ___
Suitable floor surface	Yes ___	No ___

C. Bloodborne pathogens control (OSHA standards)

Exposure control plan established regarding:

Determination of occupational exposure (e.g., "at risk" personnel identified)	Yes ___	No ___
Required annual training session for employees with occupational exposure	Yes ___	No ___
Provision of hepatitis B vaccine to "at risk" employees	Yes ___	No ___
Policies/procedures for reporting exposure incidents	Yes ___	No ___
MRSA education and guidelines	Yes ___	No ___

Appropriate emergency controls established:

Hand washing facilities/antiseptic hand cleaner and towels available	Yes ___	No ___
Contaminated sharps disposal container available	Yes ___	No ___

Regulated waste containers with biohazard label or color code available	Yes ___	No ___
Appropriate work practice controls established	Yes ___	No ___
Latex/Nitrile gloves used regularly	Yes ___	No ___
Appropriate disinfectant (e.g., 10% bleach solution) used to disinfect surfaces	Yes ___	No ___
Proper disposal facilities available for regulated waste	Yes ___	No ___
Proper disposal facilities available for contaminated sharps	Yes ___	No ___
Proper disposal facilities available for contaminated towels	Yes ___	No ___

D. Attire

Professional appearance

Does the AT have a specific dress code s/he must adhere to for practices?
 Yes ___ No ___

Does the AT have a specific dress code s/he must adhere to for games?
 Yes ___ No ___

Is the AT allowed to determine his/her own dress and grooming standards?
 Yes ___ No ___

E. Salary

Are you considered a certified staff? Yes ___ No ___

Are you considered classified staff? Yes ___ No ___

Are you eligible for tenure when qualified? Yes ___ No ___

Are you paid from the same pay scale as the teachers? Yes ___ No ___

Do you receive the same benefit package as the teachers? Yes ___ No ___

Are you eligible for comp time? Yes ___ No ___

Do you receive vacation/personal and sick time? Yes ___ No ___

Are you a 10-month employee? Yes ___ No ___

Are you an 11-month employee? Yes ___ No ___

F. Budget

Do you have total control over what is purchased and from whom? Yes ___ No ___

Are you given no dollar amount, but asked what you want and then the administration cuts what they do not have money for? Yes ___ No ___

If you run out of a supply, is there money to buy more through the course of the year?
 Yes ___ No ___

Is there a separate (capital) budget for items that are reusable, or over \$100.00?
 Yes ___ No ___

Have the number of athletes or the number of sports/teams been increased, while the amount of money provided for supplies been held constant or decreased?
 Yes ___ No ___

Does the booster club(s) provide money to teams and sports for improvements?
 Yes ___ No ___

Does the booster club(s) regularly request information on needs from the administration or even yourself?
 Yes ___ No ___

Are you allowed to sell items such as sports drinks, tape, mouthpieces, etc. from the athletic training room as a fund-raiser?
 Yes ___ No ___

V. Additional questions to consider

1. Does your school have a regular system used to review the effectiveness of the athletic program in preventing injury or illness? Yes ___ No ___
2. Does your school have a written emergency action plan? Yes ___ No ___
3. Does your state have laws and regulations pertaining specifically to coaches' education in regard to first aid and athletic injury situations beyond CPR? Yes ___ No ___
4. Does your state have laws and regulations pertaining specifically to who can provide care for injuries sustained in sports and athletics beyond first aid and CPR? Yes ___ No ___
5. Is the profession of athletic training regulated in your state? Yes ___ No ___
6. Does the accessibility of the proposed athletic training room comply with the ADA? Yes ___ No ___
7. Does the proposed athletic training room have outside access? Yes ___ No ___
8. Does the proposed athletic training room have adequate HVAC (heating and ventilation) Yes ___ No ___
9. Is the proposed athletic training room accessible equally by both boys and girls? Yes ___ No ___
10. Does your school have a strong financial support system? Yes ___ No ___
11. Is there an outside source for funding activities, salaries and stipends? Yes ___ No ___
12. Has your school system been able to avoid terminating teachers or workers for lack of funding? Yes ___ No ___
13. Do coaches and activity sponsors feel adequately paid for extra duty services? Yes ___ No ___
14. Is your school system's financial outlook positive/adequate/favorable for the next 2-5 years? Yes ___ No ___
15. Does your school have a strong athletic support? Yes ___ No ___
16. Does your school have a history of hiring and firing coaches based on winning percentage and championships achieved? Yes ___ No ___
17. Are games and events (including travel) scheduled during school hours? Yes ___ No ___

18. Are students excused during the day for athletics or activities for regular season games? Yes ___ No ___

19. Do you have courses specifically designed for athletic teams and practices? Yes ___ No ___

20. Is physical education required for graduation? Yes ___ No ___

21. Does athletic participation fulfill PE requirements? Yes ___ No ___

22. Does your state department of education provide extra funding for vocational Career & Technical Education job training? Yes ___ No ___

23. Does your school include a vocational job-training program? Yes ___ No ___

24. Does your school currently have a "Health Occupations" course in the curriculum? Yes ___ No ___

25. Does your school or district currently have a "Sports Medicine" or "Athletic Training" course or class in the curriculum? Yes ___ No ___

26. Does your school currently have a "Human Physiology/Anatomy" course in the curriculum? Yes ___ No ___

27. Does your school currently have requirement for coaches to take courses in first aid and CPR? Yes ___ No ___

28. Does your school currently have requirements for coaches to take courses in athletic injury management? Yes ___ No ___

29. Does your school currently have Employee Wellness courses for staff and faculty? Yes ___ No ___

30. Where is the source of your athletic funding? (Budgeted funds, booster funds, activity fees, or combination of the preceding.) Describe the distribution in specific percentages.

Budget	_____ %
Booster club donations	_____ %
Activity fees	_____ %
Gate receipts	_____ %
Other funding	_____ %

31. What is the range of head coaches' stipends or salaries?

Summer	\$ _____
Fall	\$ _____
Winter	\$ _____
Spring	\$ _____
Summer	\$ _____

32. What is the total number of coaches employed by your school? _____

33. What percentage of the targeted school district's total budget is allocated for sports and activities? _____ %

34. When was the last raise given to teachers? _____

35. When was the last raise given to coaches? _____

36. When was the last raise given to staff? _____

	Very strong	Strong	Neutral	Weak	Very weak
37. Describe the level of support your athletic/activities director has for hiring an AT.					
38. Describe the level of support your principal has for hiring an AT.					
39. Describe the level of support your school board has for hiring an AT.					
40. Describe the level of support your booster club has for hiring of AT.					
41. Describe the level of support your students have for hiring an AT.					
42. Describe the level of support your school community as a whole has for hiring an AT.					
43. Describe the level of support your coaches have for hiring an AT.					
44. Describe the level of support your athletic/activities director has for sports and athletics.					
45. Describe the level of support your principal has for sports and athletics.					
46. Describe the level of support your school board has for sports and athletics.					
47. Describe the level of support your booster club has for sports and athletics.					
48. Describe the level of support your students have for sports and athletics.					
49. Describe the level of support your school community as a whole has for sports and athletics.					
50. Describe the level of support your coaches have for sports and athletics.					
51. Describe the level of support your athletic/activities director has for academics.					
52. Describe the level of support your principal has for academics.					
53. Describe the level of support your school board has for academics.					
54. Describe the level of support your booster club has for academics.					
55. Describe the level of support your Students have for academics.					

56. Describe the level of support your school community as a whole has for academics.					
57. Describe the level of support your coaches have for academics.					

Evaluation of results

Total the numbers in each column to establish the "climate" of support you would have toward proposing a full-time AT model or an athletic trainer/teacher model.

The ratio of Very Strong to Weak and athletic versus academic support identified, added to the information obtained in the other sections, will assist you in determining the most potentially successful model of athletic trainer position to propose.

	Athletic director	Principal	Superintendent	School Board	Human resources
58. Who makes the hiring recommendations for athletic coaches and staff?					
59. Who makes the hiring recommendations academic faculty and staff?					

60. What are the daily physical education requirements for graduation at the school?

61. How many students participate in athletic activities in your school?

Fall _____ Winter _____ Spring _____

62. How many total students participate in activities throughout the year? _____

63. How many sports does your school provide? _____

64. How many 'non-traditional' student athletes (dance, drill, cheer, etc.) at your school? _____

65. Are you expected to evaluate/treat/rehab PE students with medicals or injuries?

Yes ___ No ___

66. Are you expected to care for (or assist in caring for) non-athlete student injuries?

Yes ___ No ___

67. Are you often asked to evaluate/treat/rehabilitate faculty/staff members?

Yes ___ No ___

Does your school's athletic training program:

- Determine the student's readiness to participate?
- Promote safe and appropriate practice, competition and treatment facilities?
- Advise on the selection, fit, function and maintenance of athletic equipment?
- Develop and implement a comprehensive emergency action plan?
- Establish protocols regarding environmental conditions?
- Develop injury and illness prevention strategies?
- Provide for on-site recognition, evaluation and immediate treatment of injury and illness, with appropriate referrals?
- Facilitate rehabilitation and reconditioning?
- Provide for psychosocial consultation and referral?
- Provide scientifically sound nutritional counseling and education?
- Participate in the development and implementation of a comprehensive athletic health care administrative system (e.g., personal health information, policies and procedures, insurance, referrals, record keeping)?
- Follow state/national approved concussion policy for evaluation and return-to-play?

	Yes	No
1. Does your school have at least one staff member who consistently reviews and organizes records such as injury reports, physical forms, treatment reports and orders, etc., for the entire athletic program?		
2. Does your school provide at least one staff member who performs athletic training duties specific to a job description and consistent with state law?		
3. Does your school have qualified/certified medical personnel (certified athletic trainers (ATs) or medical doctors (MDs) at the facility <u>daily</u> to perform medical duties for student athletic injuries or illness before examination by advanced medical personnel?		
4. Does your school have after-school or weekend activities at which qualified/certified medical personnel (ATs or MDs) are present?		
5. Does your school emphasize student health care by providing a school registered nurse (RN) during the academic day?		

6. How many different practice and game facilities are used for all sports? _____
 On-site: Fall sports _____ Winter _____ Spring _____
 Off-site: Fall sports _____ Winter _____ Spring _____

7. Who has the final say on return to play for each injury and athlete?

- _____ Team physician
- _____ Treating physician
- _____ Athletic director
- _____ Principal
- _____ Coach
- _____ Parent
- _____ Student
- _____ Certified/Licensed Athletic Trainer (AT)
- _____ Other _____

8. Who has the final say on return to play for each injury and athlete in the absence of a physician?

- Team physician
- Treating physician
- Athletic director
- Principal
- Coach
- Parent
- Student
- Certified/Licensed Athletic Trainer (AT)
- Other _____

Chapter Two Notes

Chapter Three – Working Within the School System

There are many athletic trainers who enjoy working in the secondary school setting. It may be that they enjoy working with secondary school athletes. They might also enjoy many of the advantages that working at the secondary school setting offers, such as higher salaries/benefits; Sundays and summers off; etc. These benefits can at times far outweigh the disadvantages of the setting, thus prompting some ATs to seek employment as a secondary school athletic trainer.

However, many times athletic trainers in this setting are also required to teach a full course load. Teaching a full load plus the demanding athletic training schedule can at times result in poor performance in one or both areas. Unfortunately, when faced with the realities of doing both jobs, some athletic trainers give up and leave the secondary school setting. Some may end up leaving the profession altogether. Burnout can be a major problem, and, for some, is inevitable. How can one find a happy balance between teaching and athletic training? Is it possible to reduce the teaching load without affecting the salary? To find the answer or solution you must first start with a plan.

How does the system work?

Before change can take place, you have to understand the administrative infrastructure within your school and school district (e.g., flow chart, hierarchy; etc.). In many cases, it is beneficial to build support at the lower levels of the chain of command before addressing those higher up. Going straight to an upper level administrator (or appearing to do so) before working with your athletic director or principal may negatively impact your ability to effect positive, lasting change.

Next, research the policy on full-time educators (FTEs). Your district might require one FTE for a given number of students. This is a very important concept to understand and doing so will increase the chances that your proposal to your administration will be successful. Ensure that your proposal takes into account the many aspects of this area from your school and/or district.

Teaching alternatives

If you desire to reduce the teaching load you may need to consider some possible alternatives. These alternatives may include things such as providing lunchtime or in-school suspension supervision, acting as hall monitor, or serving as an assistant principal. Perhaps your school system would allow for the “buying down” of the teaching portion of your contract. In essence, your administration manipulates staffing numbers so that you teach a reduced load yet retain your full salary. This could serve as the initial step or an intermediate step in eliminating all of your teaching responsibilities. A full-time, stand-alone athletic training position is the optimal position in the minds of many ATs. Justifying such a change will take effort on your part as well as by your support team, including site administration, coaches, athletic personnel, union representatives, etc.

Identifying Sources of Support

The *Survey of Public Perception*, although lengthy, will gather information to help in developing a proposal and identifying those who will support your efforts. **Make copies of this section and find out what people really think about your program and the school’s athletic program as a whole. This will become valuable data as you compose your proposal.**

Ideas or Strategies

1. If you are employed as both a teacher and athletic trainer, document the total amount of time spent performing each facet of your job. Chart the number of hours spent on teaching. Include items such as class load, the number of daily preparations, instructional time, class size, and the amount of class preparation required. Chart the hours spent on athletic training. Include hours spent performing injury evaluation, rehabilitation, game coverage, education of coaches, and communicating with parents, coaches, physicians, administration; etc. Document these hours based on a daily, weekly and monthly timeframe. Include the number of students and athletes participating in each facet of your job.

2. Prepare a report highlighting the total number of students receiving healthcare through your athletic training program. Develop charts or graphs that show the number of evaluations, treatments, and rehabilitation sessions provided during specific time intervals (weekly, monthly, seasonally, and yearly). Much of this data may be easily generated if you use a computer-based injury tracking system, such as SportsWare or SIMS. Data like this can be very effective in demonstrating your value to the school. Emphasize that students who are receiving these services in school are not missing school to go to a doctor's office or outside rehabilitation facility. Parents also appreciate not having to take time off from work to take their child out of school for treatment or rehabilitation. An excellent article was published in the June 1993 issue of *NATA News* titled "Showing Our Value in \$ and Cents" (Berry 1993). This article outlines an excellent procedure to show what you do. Care must be used not to say that the ATs provided a certain dollar amount of services; the AT should be certain to state that s/he provided the "equivalent of" this amount of services.

3. Provide a history of the turnover rate of teachers/athletic trainers at your school or within the area.

4. Provide information on how athletic trainers are regulated in your state.

5. Develop a presentation for local parent groups (booster club, PTA, etc.); include information from the athletic training report. Arguments for reducing the teaching load include the following:

- Increased contact with injured athletes during the school day
- Better communication with parents and physicians
- Increased rehabilitation opportunities during the school day
- Include either letters of support or testimonies from the local medical community
- Decreased turnover ratio of the AT employee (and thus improved consistency of care)

Additionally, the AT must be sure to identify the following points and take care to ensure that they have been accounted for.

1. Who really has the power in the school or school system? This is the person who ultimately pulls the strings or approves the proposal. Many times this is the superintendent or an assistant superintendent, director of personnel and/or finance, director of athletics/activities or the school board. Make sure you know who this person is and make sure you know where the union, booster club(s) and secretaries fit into the power structure.

2. Follow the chain of command! This cannot be overstated. If you upset someone by going over his/her head, s/he will squash your proposal before it ever hits the table. Make sure everyone knows what is going on and how they fit in.

3. By first understanding your situation, identifying your sources of support, collecting data and then developing a presentation, you have a route to better your situation. The rest is up to you.

Chapter Three Notes

Chapter Four – Changing Your Employment Model

Support Staff to Teacher/Athletic Trainer

Classified Staff, also known as Support Staff, do not appear on the certified teaching scale. Examples of Support Staff are:

- Custodial
- Grounds/maintenance
- Campus monitor
- Technology aide
- Classroom aide

Certified athletic trainers interested in transitioning from a support staff position to that of an athletic trainer/teacher have many issues to consider. There are various disparities in the two roles, most notably in the pay, benefits, and responsibilities. It is imperative that ATs who are considering teaching possess a clear understanding of the positives and negatives associated with this new role before committing to it.

Considerations

Adding teaching responsibilities to the already full plate of the secondary school athletic trainer generally means longer working hours, devoting a significant amount of time to class preparation and grading, and losing schedule flexibility. However, certified teachers can look forward to a higher salary, better benefits, and an opportunity to instruct students in an appropriate environment. The ability to teach on a reduced schedule needs to be considered. If it is not an option immediately, keep it in mind for the future.

Each individual should evaluate his/her situation to determine whether the benefits outweigh the additional obligations and make a decision accordingly.

Making the Transition

For athletic trainers who want to become certified teaching employees, there are several steps that should be taken to ensure that the transition is supported by school administration.

Learn state regulations — The first step for a prospective teacher is to determine whether s/he possesses the qualifications to teach in his/her state. The best place to obtain this information is from the credential analyst at the school district office or the state department of education's licensure office.

Gauge academic needs — ATs already qualified to teach specific subjects should determine if there is a need for their classroom expertise in the district/school. For instance, there typically is not a great need for physical education teachers. However, school districts often lack an adequate number of science, math, English, core, or special education teachers. The AT interested in teaching should attempt to match his/her qualifications to the school district's needs to ensure a successful career shift.

Gain administrative approval — ATs should seek out school administrators and gain their support for applications for *emergency credentials*. An emergency credential is a great way to get a foot in the door to a teaching assignment. It is not, however, the easiest to complete with the schedule of a teacher and athletic trainer. This process should be investigated before committing to an assignment.

Most school systems and states offer emergency credentials (which may be termed differently in different states) to those who wish to work in the school system. Recently, “No Child Left Behind“ has changed how these credentials are being offered. An employee is given temporary credentials based on life experience, training in a specific field (such as a vocation or profession) and course work taken. The employee must then complete additional course work in the field of education and related areas based on an evaluation of his/her transcripts, etc. If you are interested in this type of credentialing, care must be used to ensure that this type of credential is available in your state.

Negotiate classroom obligations — Petitioning for a reduction in class schedule will enable the AT to fully meet all needs of the new position. It is extremely difficult to teach a full load each day while providing comprehensive athletic healthcare. Understanding this axiom and requesting adjustments to a rigid teaching schedule are important to maintaining one’s mental health and career goals.

Start a class — ATs can demonstrate a benefit to both students and administration by developing an athletic training curriculum. This provides the school with another academic offering, while giving students an added elective. It will allow the AT’s area of expertise to be of use. This curriculum should be developed and adopted by the school district before any position shift. Consider the fact that the school may not be able to offer the reduced teaching position right away. If this is the case, see if the administration would consider it over the long term. It may be worth the wait. Additionally, the state department of education may have already adopted (or your school district if there are other high schools in the district) a sports medicine or athletic training curriculum. Adopt this curriculum (this will occur much more quickly than if you invent your own) and you are on the road to success.

Stipend to Salary

For an athletic trainer to be considered for a newly created, full-time position, a foundation must be laid offering justification for that position. A prudent AT will evaluate his/her situation to determine the needs of the school, the principal, the athletic director, and the coaches. Use the Self-Evaluation in Sections 1 and 2 of this document. Once these are identified, the AT can demonstrate how those needs are being met, or s/he can show how they cannot be met under the existing conditions. This will offer the AT a positive position to begin negotiations. Regardless of the district’s needs, there are certain things that any AT can do to provide justification for a salaried position.

Exude professionalism — Supervisors in *any* organization want to feel that they are getting what they pay for — if not more. This is especially true in the educational setting, where tight budgets are the norm. There may be reluctance for a site administrator to hire someone who dresses in shorts and t-shirts every day. When an AT acts and dresses as a healthcare professional, his/her credibility is enhanced. In fact, it is imperative that ATs present themselves as a professional, adult, faculty member of the school at all times. This leads to an increase in perceived worth and a better chance of securing a salaried position.

Demonstrate reliability — Being on time and ready for practices and games is critical to showing value to administration. Athletes rely on their athletic trainer. When the AT can show that s/he is indispensable to the district’s athletics program, it illustrates a need and makes permanently securing athletic training services a priority for the administration.

Maintain documentation — Keeping accurate records of both injuries and treatments will assist in justifying a full-time position. Not only will these documents show what the athletic trainer does on a daily basis, they will also offer a look at the money saved by having an on-site healthcare professional administering to the school's athletes.

Distribute season reports — Superiors need to be informed of the athletic trainer's roles and responsibilities. End-of-season reports provide injury information, while clueing superiors in on the significant role an AT plays in the athletics program. Distributing these reports in a timely fashion also shows how the AT goes above and beyond the call of duty to keep administrators in the loop. Record keeping was once considered a necessary evil for an AT. It should now be considered the best offensive weapon to enhance an AT position.

Gain support — Organizations such as the youth football league, Little League baseball, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts or any other community-based organization may benefit from the services of an AT. ATs who volunteer their time providing educational or athletic training services to the community gain direct access to a segment of the population that can be very influential in the decisions made on campus and in their school district.

Educate supervisors and peers — When others realize the education, background, and responsibilities of the AT, there is increased level of respect. Athletic trainers who portray themselves as healthcare providers, rather than merely "tapers," have the respect of those whose opinions matter, which often leads to an easier time securing a full-time position.

Chapter Four Notes

Chapter Five -- Understanding Contracts and Negotiations

The following are key questions that should be asked with regards to your contract and contract negotiations. They will help to ensure that the certified athletic trainer receives adequate current and retirement benefits. In addition, the job description is a vital part of your contract. It is imperative that you understand what you are being asked to provide for the school.

If you are on an athletic training contract:

Do you have a copy of your contract?

It is prudent to have a copy of your contract in your files. The copy should be dated and signed by both the employer (school district) and the certified athletic trainer. The contract should include a detailed job description. In the event a question arises regarding the certified athletic trainer's duties and responsibilities, this document will provide immediate clarification.

Do you have the same contract as teachers?

Having the same contract as teachers does not necessarily mean it is the same in all aspects. Ensure that all areas of compensation are considered. For instance, are you on the same pay scale but not the same benefits package? Are you on the same benefits package but not the same pay scale? Do you have the same work hours as a teacher? There may be other areas to consider; be thorough in your investigation to ensure you are getting your fair share.

Are you part-time or full-time?

To answer this question, you need to determine how many hours are considered part-time versus full-time for the school district. Often, this categorization affects the benefits you receive. If dual responsibilities are expected (teacher/athletic trainer), how will you be classified as a certified athletic trainer? Be wary of a position such as this. The school district may list you as a full-time teacher and part-time certified athletic trainer. If you are eligible for tenure, it will be only for the full-time position that is held. Budget cuts may result in the elimination of all part-time positions, namely the athletic training position. Regardless of what is on paper, explain to the school administrators that athletic training is a full-time position and push to get it listed as such.

Is your contract for 10, 11 or 12 months?

The ideal position is 10. Summer allows for downtime to get away from your athletic training room. During this time, many certified athletic trainers choose to make extra money by working at camps or non-profession-related places of employment. Others like the freedom of relaxing and not adhering to a formal schedule. The athletic trainer can use this time to refuel and prepare for fall preseason camps. Whatever the case, a 10-month contract provides the opportunity to make the summer months fit your needs.

With a 12-month contract, vacation time becomes a major concern. How much vacation time is awarded? Will vacation time increase with longevity? When can vacation time be taken? Most 12-month school employees can request a vacation at any time during the school year, but an AT has to consider coverage of sports when on vacation. Can you choose to use your time during the winter or spring break? Who will cover practices and games while you are away? Will there be additional costs (substitute pay) associated with this? These are all situations that create conflict with a 12-month contract.

Can you take advantage of all benefits in the contract such as “buyouts” of unused sick time? Some contracts allow for “buyouts” or payment for unused sick time at retirement. It is important to inquire where the certified athletic trainer is placed in relation to other staff in the school district, that is, teachers, administrators, support staff, and custodians. The certified athletic trainer should not be slighted with sick time “buyouts” compared with other district employees.

Do you belong to a union?

Some certified athletic trainers are considered “independents” or “singletons.” These terms mean that they negotiate their own contract. If a conflict arises; however, they have no one to legally support him or her. For this reason alone, it is of the utmost importance to find a way to join your union. When employed at the secondary school level in most states, 80% of your union dues are automatically deducted from your pay. With this in mind, it is to your advantage to join the union and voluntarily pay the remaining 20%. Be wary of district personnel directors. They try to discourage the certified athletic trainer from joining the union. Not having them as “independents” lessens the personnel directors’ administrative control. In short, on accepting the position, investigate the district union representative(s) and express an interest in joining both the local and state unions.

Does your Workers' Compensation cover you for a 6-day workweek?

On the average, certified athletic trainers normally work 6 days a week, whereas teachers and other district employees follow a 5-day workweek. Typically, a school district contract will cover injuries on the job incurred in a traditional setting. Knowing this, you should review your contract carefully. Most contracts are similar to form letters with specific insertions for job descriptions, sick time and compensation. The athletic training contract should indicate Workers' Compensation coverage for a 6-day workweek. This should include, but not be limited to, weekends, holidays, and away events.

Do you have the same benefits as teachers?

Some contracts put restrictions on the type and amount of insurance the employer will provide for you. For example, if you are a part-time employee, your benefits might be limited. Another option is to compensate the certified athletic trainer more but to offer no benefits. In the latter example, you will need to pay for your insurance plan. Although compensation rate is important, a comprehensive benefits package may prove more valuable in the long run.

If you are on the teacher’s contract:

Do you work the same number of months, days and hours per week?

Teachers work a specific number of hours per day, days per week and months per year. Is your contract similar? How is it different? If different, the certified athletic trainer must ask himself or herself, “Is there a distinct advantage being taken of me”? If the answer to this question is “yes,” then it is time to consider renegotiating your contract.

Do you have the same holidays?

Teachers get time off for certain national holidays, winter break and spring break. When school is not in session, practices and games usually continue without interruption. Are you expected to provide medical coverage during those times? Also, it is not uncommon for various teams to schedule their practices throughout the day. What may be a 2-hour practice for each team results in an 8-hour day for the certified athletic trainer. Are you required to remain on-site for the entire day, or are you permitted to stay for only a portion

of the practice? If the AT only covers a portion of the practices, which practices will be covered? In the case of those “long” days, sometimes certified athletic trainers residing close to school return home and place themselves “on-call” if needed. Keep in mind; however, that all parties (certified athletic trainer, athletic director, school administrator and superintendent) must agree to this decision. Also, it would be wise to include this clause in your contract.

Are you on the same pay scale as teachers?

The pay scale may vary depending on:

- Years of experience at the high school level
- Years of experience at an outside position
- Hours worked per day
- Hours worked per week
- Independent versus union employee

The easiest method by far is to be placed on the same pay scale as the teachers. The certified athletic trainer will know where s/he began and where s/he is going. In addition, the school district will know just how much to budget for that specific line item. Through this example, one can see how being on the pay scale is beneficial to both parties. Some states pay the athletic trainer a “base salary” based on the teacher’s pay scale and then pay an additional stipend per sports season. It is important to be sure you are being fairly compensated for **both** aspects of your position.

Do you get compensated pay/time for overtime?

Once you determine how many working hours per week is expected of you, anything exceeding that number should be considered overtime. School districts may handle this in two different ways. One way is to have a pay rate per hour be predetermined and applied to all overtime hours. More common; however, is to receive a seasonal stipend equal to the highest paid coach of that season. The second way allows for time off (not vacation time) to be awarded in lieu of money. Usually, however, the time cannot be accumulated and rolled over from year to year.

Is there a stipulation for comp time?

Are total hours determined at the end of each day, week or pay period? Due to time variations from day to day, some school districts base overtime hours on anything above and beyond a 40-hour week or a 120-hour pay period. If this is the case, it is conceivable that you can work 4 hours on 1 day and then 12 hours on the next day. If, at the conclusion of the week you acquire less than 40 hours, overtime might not be a consideration.

If you have your own contract (“independent” or “singleton”):

Do you negotiate for yourself?

An “independent” or “singleton” refers to those negotiating their own contract. These individuals are not in a union. As a negotiator, you must be somewhat hard-nosed. Although this approach is required to get what you want, it may produce unwanted tension between you and the personnel director. This tension may make future negotiations much more difficult.

The *advantage* of being an independent is that you are the master of your own fate. The *disadvantage* of being an independent is that you are the master of your own fate. If you are not familiar with contract negotiations, the final results might not be in your favor.

Unfortunately, you have no representation from union professionals experienced in dealing with these situations.

Do you negotiate yearly or in conjunction with the teachers' contract?

Most independents negotiate their contract on a year-to-year basis. As mentioned above, under *"Do you negotiate for yourself,"* this produces yearly unwanted tension. In addition, it forces you to use your free time to build your case for a pay increase. If one is found in that position, the most common method of case building is to conduct a survey of secondary school certified athletic trainers in your district and surrounding area.

Do you have your own pay scale?

Most independents have their own pay scale. On the average, the levels on the scale do not equally correlate with the corresponding levels on the teachers' scale. The levels on the athletic training scale (excluding stipends) are typically much lower.

Does your scale max out below a teacher's max?

In addition to the individual levels being lower than the teachers' scale, the independent certified athletic trainer's scale usually has a maximum below a teacher's maximum.

Do you get the same percent increase per year as teachers?

Regardless of how the certified athletic trainer scale compares to that of the teachers in your district, you should still get the same percent increase per year. Carefully review your contract and aggressively work to have this clause included in your contract.

What are your benefits?

As long as you are a full-time employee, most school districts will offer the independent a full benefits package. Meet with other independents in the district and inquire about their benefits package. Again, a survey of secondary school certified athletic trainers in your district and surrounding area would be an invaluable tool to use during your negotiations. Refer to *"Do you have the same benefits as teachers?"*

How many days/hours do you work per week?

A survey of secondary school certified athletic trainers in your district and surrounding area would be an invaluable tool to use during your negotiations. Refer to *"If you are on the teacher's contract."*

Do you get compensated pay/time for overtime?

Meet with other independents in the district and inquire how they are compensated for overtime. A survey of secondary school certified athletic trainers in your district and surrounding area would be an invaluable tool to use during your negotiations. Refer to *"If you are on the teacher's contract."*

Is there a stipulation for comp time?

Meet with other independents in the district and inquire how they are compensated for overtime. A survey of secondary school certified athletic trainers in your district and surrounding area would be an invaluable tool to use during your negotiations. Refer to *"If you are on the teacher's contract."*

Is your position eligible for tenure?

What are your state statutes/regulations regarding tenure?

Tenure was initially established to protect academic freedom and to prevent schools from making hiring or firing decisions based on favoritism and local politics. The tenure statutes that were developed typically listed standards and procedures that had to be followed by school districts before they could dismiss a staff member. This was done in an effort to eliminate arbitrary dismissals. In short, tenure relates to job security. Not all states provide tenure and not all positions are eligible for tenure. Make sure that you know your status in relation to tenure. In addition, state laws vary from state to state as well. The example below may or may not apply to you.

Most people are under the misconception that “tenure” directly corresponds to “total job protection.” Actually, that is not the case. True, it will be much more difficult to release an employee who is tenured, but it can happen. Keep in mind; however, that a school district must establish a permissible basis for termination. Dismissal must be based only on job-related reasons and not on political expediency or be motivated by a discriminatory reason.

Equally important, a school district cannot release a tenured certified athletic trainer and hire another one with the same job description. A full-time tenured certified athletic trainer can only be replaced with either a part-time certified athletic trainer or another full-time certified athletic trainer with a different job description. Regardless of the reason for termination, the certified athletic trainer has a constitutional right to pre-termination notice, an explanation of evidence for dismissal, an opportunity to respond, and a hearing in front of an impartial party. The AT position is not always a tenured position. An athletic director could choose not to rehire an AT even though s/he is tenured as a teacher.

Check your state department of education’s Web site for an explanation of all statutes and regulations. Details may also be located on the district’s Web site, within the district’s policy manual and at your local or school library. For the inexperienced, the legal language of these documents may be difficult to interpret. For this reason, your union representative is the best resource to answer any questions in layman’s terms.

Are you required by your union/department of education to be tenured?

Tenure usually occurs, with an entry-level certificate, at the completion of three years and one day of employment in the public school sector. If you are on the teachers’ contract, you will be eligible for tenure. As an independent, it is the discretion of the school district to award you tenure.

Administrative details

Do you have a job description?

Contracts are binding legal documents indicating an agreement between two or more parties. They do not necessarily have to include job descriptions. To eliminate confusion regarding your duties and responsibilities, the certified athletic trainer should have a detailed job description included in the written contract.

Do you know what your job description states?

Always carefully read and review your contract before signing it. Clauses differing from the verbal agreement between you and the school personnel director may, intentionally or unintentionally, be added or deleted in the written form. Every time your contract is renewed, it would be good practice to read and review it before signing.

Do you have duties other than athletic training?

Some school districts hire a certified athletic trainer with the assumption that the person is available to perform various non-athletic training duties throughout the day such as: substitute teacher, hall duty or security. If this is the case, you must ask yourself these questions:

“Is it in my job description?”

“Will I be compensated for the extra duties?”

“Does Workers' Compensation cover me while performing these duties?”

“If there is a conflict between the non-athletic training duties and my role as a certified athletic trainer, which takes priority?”

Presently, we live in a litigious society. To avoid litigation, the certified athletic trainer must always act in a prudent manner. During the school day, wear only one hat at a time. For example, when acting as a substitute teacher, DO NOT practice athletic training. If an athlete visits your classroom while you are supervising a class and you direct your attention toward the athlete, class supervision is compromised. In the event that a student in the classroom somehow becomes injured while you are working with an athlete, you will be held liable for “lack of adequate supervision.”

Who supervises you?

In many cases, the athletic director supervises the certified athletic trainer. Other personnel known to serve as supervisors are the director of student health services, school/district nurse, school physician, health and physical education department chair and building principal. Please refer to the NATA Position Statement: Inter-Association Consensus Statement on Best Practices for Sports Medicine Management for Secondary Schools and Colleges

How are observations and evaluations conducted?

The designated supervisor is responsible for observing and evaluating the certified athletic trainer. Due to the nature of your job and most supervisors' lack of experience in dealing with health care, evaluations should not be based on injury management methods and techniques. Rather, job performance should be graded on: professional conduct, communication skills, record keeping, and adherence to standing orders. The number of observations per year should be equal to that of the other teachers or independent staff members, depending on the contract. Usually, written evaluations can be reviewed by a school employee a minimum of 24 hours following a meeting with the supervisor. The certified athletic trainer should be permitted to explain any disagreements, in written form, on their evaluation. Finally, the evaluation should be signed by the supervisor and certified athletic trainer and a copy secured in your files.

Are you reimbursed for continuing education?

In most cases, school districts will reimburse for continuing education up to a certain predetermined amount. The situation may be handled in one of two ways. One method is to place the certified athletic trainer in the general continuing education account shared by everyone in the district. Be aware that this account typically becomes depleted by the second half of the school year. As a result, all continuing education opportunities offered in the second half of the school year are denied. The second and most desirable method is to initiate a separate continuing education account to be used only by the certified athletic trainer. This method allows you the flexibility to pick and choose your continuing educational opportunities without the fear of insufficient funds toward the end of the

school year. An argument in your favor is that the certified athletic trainer MUST accumulate 50 continuing education units within a 2- year period or certification will be forfeited.

Does your administration encourage active participation in professional organizations?

Performing athletic training duties at your school can be an exciting and many times challenging, experience. The most rewarding; however, may be the opportunity to contribute to the profession on the state, district, and national levels. Come to terms with your administration regarding your growth as a professional. Ask if they would permit a professional leave (usually no more than a few days), for you to participate on professional committee or office positions.

Conclusion

Understanding the legal aspects of you employment contract can make or break your position and personal satisfaction. Ensure that you know what you are required to provide for your employer. In addition, make sure that you know what they are required to provide you. Most benefits go mostly unused by employees mainly because they do not know about them.

Chapter Five Notes

Chapter Six – Improving Your Bottom Line

Salaries vary widely across the country depending on the type of position held by the AT. Typically, the best salaries are found with positions that include teaching duties in addition to athletic training responsibilities.

Full-time teachers' salaries range from \$37,000 to \$90,000+ depending on years of experience, degrees held, and numbers of credits earned. It is important to remember that public school salaries may be somewhat higher than those of private schools, due to the funding that comes from local and state governments.

Most school district teaching salary contracts are based on a grid or step format where you move across the pay scale as you earn predetermined college credits, and move down the scale as you increase your years of experience. There are barriers in both directions. Typically a school district will recognize only 15 years of continuous experience and a master's degree of some kind with 30 to 45 credits beyond that degree. Often there is an education barrier of a BA +30/45 credits, where the only way you can advance to the next level is if you earn your master's degree. Therefore, it is in your best interest financially to earn your master's degree as quickly as you can. Most state departments of education require teachers to earn college credits to remain certified to teach. Some contracts use some type of advancement formula to determine salary: 3% × 3% is one example. With each year of experience, you get an additional 3% of your salary and an additional 3% if you advance academically. Listed below is an example of a northeast school district's pay schedule based on 5 years of employment.

Years experience	BA/BS	BA + 25	Masters	M +30	PhD.
1	42,300	42,604	43,217	43,842	44,640
2	43,100	43,404	44,017	44,642	45,440
3	44,100	44,404	45,017	45,642	46,440
4	45,450	45,754	46,367	46,992	47,790
5	46,400	46,904	47,517	48,142	48,940

(Penn-Trafford School District.)

An advantage of being a certified teacher as well as a certified athletic trainer is that you are often "guaranteed" a salary increase from year to year due to a negotiated teaching contract.

Part-time teaching positions are paid depending on percentage of school day worked. Full Time Equivalent (FTE) is the term used to denote this percentage or, more correctly, decimal. For example, .3 FTE would equate to teaching 30% of what a full-time teacher would teach, which means your salary would be 30% of that of a full-time teacher. However, many school districts will realize that when hiring an athletic trainer/teacher, you may be teaching only a partial schedule but you are working a full day plus extended time, so that is factored into your teaching salary, often placing you on a full-time teaching status.

Some athletic trainers are paid for their teaching responsibilities based on the teacher's salary scale while being compensated for their athletic training duties on a different salary

scale. Stipends are typically the most common way in which athletic trainers earn additional income beyond that of their teaching salary. Activity and athletic stipends are unique to each school district. Some athletic trainers may earn a stipend for each sport season; others may earn an annual stipend, while others have a formula based on experience and education factored into a predetermined base salary. This amount varies greatly from as low as \$4,000 to as high as \$20,000 annually. Depending on the school, these stipends may be compensation for the extra hours (evenings and weekends), or they may be the entire compensation for the athletic training duties.

Obviously, the ideal situation would be that a secondary school athletic trainer has no teaching duties, yet is paid on the teacher's salary scale. A major step towards this goal may be getting classified as a "certificated" employee (like the teachers and other "professional" staff) instead of a "staff" member (such as the secretaries, custodians, and security staff). This step could significantly increase your pay. To achieve it, you may need to teach a class or two. Physical education, anatomy and physiology, or Sports Medicine classes are commonly taught by ATs.

There are many different scenarios in which certified athletic trainers are employed at the secondary school setting. The most common are as a full-time athletic trainer with no teaching responsibilities, full-time athletic trainer with teaching responsibilities, or through a clinical/hospital outreach program. Only you can determine what situation works best for you if you want to be a secondary school athletic trainer.

It may be difficult to negotiate a raise in your individual salary because it is often tied into a school district's master contract with the local teachers' organization. However, with inclusion in the master contract, you may be eligible for the benefits afforded to full-time employees. These benefits may include paid time off, a comprehensive health package, life and disability insurance plan, and retirement benefits. You will need to investigate the possibilities of enrollment in any of these benefit plans. Keep in mind that if you are a school district's first certified athletic trainer or replacing an established professional, benefits could be new ground for the school district. Therefore, be prepared to explain why you should be eligible for these benefits.

An area where you can and often do have the opportunity to improve your salary is if you receive a stipend in addition to your teaching salary.. The best way to show why an increase is warranted is to show what you have done and are doing to provide the best care to your student-athletes. To do that you need to keep well-documented records of injury evaluations; treatments as well as communications with coaches, physicians, and parents (see Chapter 5). If you show that there is a need for your position and that you are vital to a school's athletic department, then you are providing proof of why a pay increase is warranted.

NATA also has salary information that can assist you in your salary negotiations. Visit the NATA salary survey database at <http://www.nata.org/nata-salary-survey>

Some alternative ideas on how to "increase" your bottom line

Another way to improve your bottom line is to work at getting your school or school district to provide full compensation for professional meetings to improve your skills. School districts will often have monies available for professional development. This may not seem like a "salary boost," but if you are successful in getting a meeting paid for, then that means MORE money for you that you DO NOT have to pay out of your pocket to

stay certified as an athletic trainer. Other sources of travel money are your athletic director and school parent groups whether it is a PTO/PTA type of organization or the school's booster club. Do NOT be afraid to ask the parent groups for help in attending meetings to improve your skills. They are often more than willing to help, considering you are taking care of their children. The tools you want to use to show why it is necessary to attend these meetings are the BOC's Role Delineation Study and your injury and treatment logs. (To stay BOC certified, an AT must maintain CEUs, which are gained by attending the meetings.) You must show why you need to stay current in this allied health care profession. An administrator expects nothing less of a teacher and a parent will not accept anything but the best for his/her child.

As a certified athletic trainer, there are other expenses, besides earning CEUs that you must incur to practice your skills, such as NATA membership, state association membership, state licensure fees, and professional liability insurance. These can amount to close to \$1,000 a year of out-of-pocket expenses. Talk to your athletic director, principal or appropriate school district official to "negotiate" the possibility of having these expenses covered. You may not get all of what you need the first time around, but keep at it. If you are initially unsuccessful, keep planting those ideas with your administration.

The last thing you need to keep in mind if you do end up paying for your education, association and registration fees is to save your receipts. This will help you when it is time for you to file federal, state and local income taxes. Have an accountant complete your taxes and show your receipts. S/he may be able to apply that as deductible (unreimbursed) work-related expenses, which means more income for you in the long run.

Chapter Six Notes

Chapter Seven – Increasing Your Budget

As you attempt to stay within your budget every year there are always a number of items you would like to acquire to better serve your student athletes. The following points are basic strategies to improve your budget. Remember, it can take time to gather the necessary resources, support, and supplies you would like – be patient.

Evaluate the current budget

Where do budget funds come from (school based, PTA, PTO, Boosters, etc.)? Often you will be given two or three different funds or budgets to use depending on what you are buying and how much you are spending.

Supplies or maintenance and operations budget

This budget is for those items that are expendable or consumable *and/or* where the per-item cost is less than the designated amount as set by the school board. In many school districts this amount is \$100, but it may be more or less. For example, if a case of tape costs \$40 and you want to buy 20 cases for the year, you would use this budget for that purchase. The extended cost would be \$800, but the per-item cost is below the set limit, therefore the item could be purchased from this budget.

Capital budget

This type of budget is typically used for those items that are reused year after year *and/or* those items that cost more than the designated amount as determined by the school board. This is the budget from which items such as stationary bicycles, ice machines, modalities, golf carts, etc., are purchased. It is important to understand how your district works its budgets and purchasing before requesting a major increase in funding or a major purchase.

Special projects budget

This type of budget is for those purchases that require creativity, additional funding from various departments, or construction/contractor involvement. When requesting facility changes, remodeling, additions, new major equipment (scoreboards, etc.), this type of budget may be used. Be sure to find out if something like this can be used for your request.

Types of Budget Processes

The book *Management Strategies in Athletic Training, Third Edition (Ray, 2005)*, provides an in-depth look at budgeting and the processes required to be successful. This text, and others that focus on this area, are suggested reading to ensure that the AT has a very strong grasp on the budgeting process before making requests for additional funds.

Spending Ceiling Budget

This type of budget is what many school systems use. The school or school district gives the AT a set amount to work with for the year based on the expenditures of the previous year. The only stipulation is that any purchase(s) that exceed the total used the previous budget cycle must be justified and approved by the appropriate supervisor. Increases in this type of budget are usually based on the inflation rate.

Spending Reduction Budget

Schools also typically use a spending reduction budget. In this type of budget, the athletic trainer must show that s/he can use less to provide the same services. If the type of

budgeting process employed in the school system is a spending ceiling, then the AT would be asked to reduce spending by X%. Purchases over this amount would have to be justified and approved.

Zero-Based Budgeting

This type of budgeting requires the AT to justify all requested expenditures.

Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Evaluation System

The PPBES is a complicated system that is rarely used by the AT for a yearly budget. This system looks at long-term projected expenses and income to produce a budget based on the set goals and objectives of the school or athletic department in addition to the athletic training program.

Fixed Budgeting

This type of budget is typically where you see the employer ask the AT to budget on the projected income and expenses of the department on a monthly basis. This is somewhat difficult and is the most inappropriate type of budgeting for schools to use since income is rare or never occurs in schools.

Variable Budgeting

Variable budgeting is used to adjust expenditures monthly so as not to exceed income on a monthly basis. Like fixed budgeting, this is rarely used and inappropriate in a school system due to lack of income.

Lump Sum Budgeting

This type of budgeting is typically seen in school systems. The district gives a school a specific amount of money to run its programs. The school/principal then divides the money up between the departments and allows the departments and teachers/ATs to determine the needs of the program and spend accordingly. Spending ceiling and spending reduction budgets are an example of this type of budget.

Line Item Budgeting

This system requires the AT to justify expenses based on predetermined categories, or "line items." For instance, consumable supplies would be a category, whereas travel would be another. Insurance, printing/copies, continuing education, etc. would all be possible categories. The AT can spend only what has been allocated in each line item as money from one line item cannot be transferred to another without permission.

Performance Budgeting

Performance budgeting is similar to line item budgeting in that the budget is divided up into categories or performance objectives. For instance, rehabilitation, pre-game/pre-practice taping, administration and education may all be some of these categories. Budgets are then allocated to fund the requirements of each of these tasks to ensure that each of the objectives is met. This is a difficult and time-consuming type of budgeting and is not usually used in a secondary school setting.

Additional questions to ask when formulating your proposal

- Are these budgets stable?
- Are these budgets dependent on the whims of the principal, AD or others?
- Are the budget and facility up-to date?
- What percentage of the budget is spent on consumable supplies, capital or large

- ticket items, and continuing education?
- Can you use educational funds to purchase supplies for both educational experiences and athletic department needs?
 - Are there ways to reappropriation funds or save money and spend it elsewhere?

Identify areas of need/deficiencies

- Identify specific areas of need.
- Determine the cost of addressing these needs.
- Provide objective supporting documentation to justify your request for budget increases in these areas

Subjective reasons for increase

- Has there been an increase in the number of student athletes, teams, or seasons?
- Has there been an extension in the length of the season(s)?
- Have certain items or equipment reached the age or condition that they need to be replaced?
- Have there been facility improvements or additions which require the purchase of new equipment?

Steps and methods of obtaining additional revenue/income

- Identify areas /persons of support, both internal and external.
- Secure donations from local parents' groups, civic organizations, physicians' groups, and corporate sponsors.
- Have patience with these groups. If they turn you down; thank them for considering your request. Return the following year and make a new request. If they approve your request, do not forget to acknowledge and thank them for their support.
- Check with your appropriate school administrators for prior approval of these types of donations.
- Run your own fundraisers.
- Work with your administration (principal, business officer, and safety/risk management personnel) to replace or purchase new equipment.
- Will these sources be continuing, or are they available one time or for the short term?

Chapter Seven Notes

Chapter Eight – Improving Your Facility

Every AT working in the secondary school setting dreams of a big, beautiful and functional athletic training room with all of the latest equipment and “toys” that are available. There is nothing wrong with this dream. Progress has always started with a dream.

When developing a plan to expand an athletic training room facility, it makes sense to come up with a “wish list.” Every AT knows that rarely will s/he get everything that is wished. However, if they do not ask, they never will get it. Expanding the athletic training room may encompass more square footage, more equipment, or maybe a larger or separate office. These can all become the foundation of the “wish list.”

Once the wish list has been established, a rationale for each component of that list needs to be created. Administrators will want to know how these needs will benefit their students. They will be hesitant to allocate funds toward this project if they cannot see how it will benefit the students.

- How will increased square footage benefit the athletes?
- How will the athletes benefit from the new equipment?
- How will the athletes benefit from a separate office space?

Data may be needed to justify these requests. Being able to show an increase in the number of athletes treated or evaluated in the training room over the years is an excellent argument for expansion.

How many treatments were given this year compared with last year?

Obviously records must be kept to show an increase in the number of student athletes receiving treatment in the athletic training room. An accurate account of the number of treatments and evaluations performed in the existing athletic training room will be of the utmost importance.

This increase in the number of student athletes using the athletic training room may be due to an increase in the number of sports offered by the school. The number of additional student athletes that are participating in the athletic program should be included in the rationale for improving facilities.

Has the outside field or inside court space been increased to accommodate the additional sports and team levels?

Another argument for increasing the size of the athletic training room is the advancement in rehabilitation techniques. The emphasis on functional strength training and rehabilitation has created a need for additional space to implement these activities. The use of foam rollers, Swiss balls and Plyometric techniques requires additional square footage to perform these exercises safely.

Consider the usage of the athletic training room during the school day. Does the room serve as a classroom or lab for an introductory sports medicine class?

In some communities the athletic training room may serve as a Red Cross triage center during natural disasters. The multiple uses of the athletic training room can be used to justify expansion.

Privacy and security are excellent arguments to be used when requesting additional or separate office space. Administrators understand the importance of privacy when it comes to the records, in particular medical records, of minors. It is also important to have an area of privacy to discuss health issues with the athletes and their parents. This separate office space may also provide for additional privacy needed with some injury evaluations.

Thought should be given to hydrotherapy modalities having a separate space. This will allow for greater supervision of the “wet area” as well as reducing the risk of slips and falls to do wet floor surfaces. The electrical supply to these wet areas must include the use of ground fault indicators (GFIs). Consideration must also be given to water supply and drainage. The type of mixing valve and the type of drain system are also of importance.

Chapter Eight Notes

Chapter Nine – Increasing Your Athletic Training Staff

There probably is not a certified athletic trainer alive working at the secondary school level that has not wondered what life would be like if they had additional help. Having inadequate time to care for all athletes in the program due to the constraints of a full schedule is one of the most frustrating things that a secondary school AT has to deal with.

As ATs continue within the profession, personal lives change and bring on new challenges. There may be changes in an athletic trainer's marital status, the addition of children, or a change in their or their spouses' health or employment status. Within the schools themselves teams and/or sports may be added, enrollment and athletic participation numbers may increase, and administrators, coaches, and parents may become more demanding of your time and resources. In cases where there is a single athletic trainer at a particular school, a strain is placed on the conscientious AT because s/he cannot be everywhere at once and they cannot be all things to all people. Although coverage policies may dictate that the AT be present at the soccer game, this does not make it any easier to explain to the parent, athlete, or coach why they were not in the gym when a serious injury occurred during a basketball game. The fact that ATs are being increasingly called on to do so many things for so many people takes a toll on their personal well-being, not to mention the well-being of the athletes and the individual teams. Adding either another full-time or part-time AT to the athletic training staff will pay great dividends not only to the existing AT but also to the athletes and athletic program in general.

Evaluate the current athletic training program

There are several important aspects that the AT needs to take into account before beginning the process of requesting additional help. The AT needs to first take stock of his/her own job performance and school's current situation. If the AT has consistently received lackluster end-of-year evaluations, then the request for additional staff is likely to fall on deaf ears. Likewise, if the AT is employed by a school district that is going through a financial crisis with cutbacks in teachers, paraprofessional staff, and/or administrators, then adding an additional AT position is also unlikely. If the AT can honestly say that s/he has received good evaluations and that his/her standing within the school community is good, coupled with a sound financial basis for the school district, then the AT should proceed with the request.

Long before any proposal is written up, it is important to have several aspects of this request done. The AT should begin by tracking and documenting the number of hours spent per week both in the athletic training room and providing athletic health care at practices and athletic events. This should be broken down by week, by season, by semester, and by year. If the AT goes to the administrator and says that s/he have been working too many hours and would like some additional staffing help but are unable to account for the number of hours spent on the athletic training aspect of the job, then the request is not likely to go very far.

It is paramount for the AT to keep other accurate records before beginning any request for additional staff. Accurate treatment records are of the utmost importance when preparing a proposal. These treatment records need to be detailed so as to extrapolate important data if need be. They should include the sport that the student athlete

participates in as well as the type of treatment received. To go along with this, it is also very important that proper documentation with initial injury reports is done. Administrators do not want to know just that the AT dealt with injuries; that is, after all, their job. They want to know that the AT dealt with a specific number of injuries and that these injuries required a specific number of treatments.

When preparing a proposal it is important to be able to determine which sports and seasons are the busiest in the athletic training room and which sports and seasons require the most amount of time commitment. Are some sports more time-intensive than others? Does this vary year to year or season to season? What are possible causes? Is it lack of practice space? Are there a higher number of participants in that particular sport? Will the addition of an athletic training position improve the situation? If possible, determine the number of sporting events that go uncovered due to overlapping events. Are certain sports or teams underserved due to lack of adequate athletic training personnel? Sometimes it is more important to know what the AT is not able to do rather than what s/he is able to do.

The AT should also have an idea of how much time they spend each day doing such things as injury evaluation, developing and performing treatment and rehabilitation programs, athletic training room cleaning and maintenance, field preparation, or administrative and organizational duties. Administration and organization would include such things as telephone calls to parents, physicians, or insurance companies; entering injury reports and treatments into a computer program; filing paperwork; developing policies and procedures; or taking care of any general athletic training room issues.

Having an up-to-date inventory and staying under budget are also very beneficial when it comes time to begin the process of asking for additional help. If the AT is unable to stay under the allotted budget or has no idea how many and what type of supplies s/he has, then s/he is facing an uphill battle before even starting.

Another important piece of information to gather includes the ratio of male to female student athletes and how many of each gender is seen in the athletic training room. This statistic can then be compared to the ratios of student athletes to coaches for each sport, principals to students, counselors to students, and teachers to students.

Sports are continually being added at most schools across the country. If another sport is not being added, then the number of participants in the existing sports may be increasing. Many schools have a "no cut" policy in regard to their athletic teams, which means that team rosters are on the increase. As team rosters increase, coaches could add additional contests to ensure that all athletes in the program get adequate competition time. With increased contests come increased time spent at the school by the AT. Once again, it is important for the AT to document the number of contests and the number of participants that these contests involve.

Other aspects of a job situation that need to be evaluated are such things as the presence of Saturday and/or holiday practices, off-campus home events, and other travel within the district that is required to fulfill the job description. If Saturday or holiday practices are held, what is the AT's coverage policy regarding these practices? Are they required to be physically on-site or are they available "on call"? Is this based on the injury risk for a particular sport(s)? For example, are you required to be on-site for varsity boys basketball practice, but on call for middle school girls tennis? For off-campus home

events, how much travel is required for the AT? At these same events, are there suitable unisex facilities in case an opposite gender athlete needs an examination?

What are the advantages to the athletes if there were more than one AT?

The AT should also consider what the possible benefit to the district would be by having additional staff. While having additional staff may help to alleviate the workload on the current AT, it should by no means be the main reason for requesting an additional position. Faster and easier access to medical care should be stressed as well as improved rehabilitative potential of the student athletes. It only stands to reason that with more staff ATs, the student athletes will have more attention devoted to them.

Another area which would benefit from additional athletic training staff would be the athletic training student aide program. This will be not only because of another person to help with student education but also because it will provide an additional point of view for the students to learn from as they increase their knowledge base. Add link to NATA position statement on proper use of the ATSA.

With additional AT staffing, preseason and postseason conditioning programs for all sports can be better monitored. These same programs could then be consulted as the individual sport coaching staff requests it. Additional AT staffing will also benefit the lower-level programs (sub-varsity or possibly middle school). Depending on the situation, this could mean better care and coverage of contests. It could also mean more quality time spent with these student athletes during their athletic times.

Although an AT cannot specifically seek to hire an AT of the opposite gender for an additional staff position, it would be optimal if such a situation occurred. There are some types of injuries that need to be evaluated by a same-gender AT to obtain the best examination. While having an AT of each gender cannot always occur, it is something else that could be emphasized during the preliminary phases of this process.

It should be determined whether or not both genders of athletes are given equal access to the AT and the athletic training room. Because of outside factors such as athletic training room location, individual sport demands, or athletic program policies, there may be unequal access for both genders. If additional staffing could alleviate some of these issues, this would also be a very beneficial aspect to be brought up in a proposal or conversation with appropriate administrators.

Improved Standard of Care

Another thing that should be considered are times when the standard level of care could not be maintained because of the constraints of having one AT providing health care to an entire athletic program. This can be something as simple as a time when a major injury occurred at one competition or practice site while the AT was at another. It is important to note that while there may be numerous examples of this, not all should be given. A few good examples should be given if possible. It is important to have the person or persons reading the proposal not be bogged down in details. When giving these examples, perhaps showing that additional staffing would help alleviate this problem in the future would be beneficial.

Determine Full-Time or Part-Time Position

Finally, before attempting to begin the process of adding additional AT staffing, the options of full-time versus part-time should be considered. If full-time is thought to be best

option, then teaching vs. non-teaching positions should be evaluated. If it is desirable for the new position to involve teaching, what teaching positions, if any, will be available at the school? If the position is to be part-time, where will that individual come from? (They could also be a teacher.) Are there hospitals or clinics nearby to help provide staffing? If so, what type of coverage will this AT be able to provide and at what cost?

When deciding on the addition of a second or third AT position, it is important to know the mindset and thought process of your school or district's administration. If they are predominantly financially motivated, (especially in tight budget situations), they may determine that it is in their best interest financially to go to two part-time AT positions (thus eliminating the cost of benefits). Or they may determine it is cheaper to bring in two clinic or hospital based ATs (whose salaries and benefits are paid by the clinic) at a lower cost than they can retain you. You want to be sure the addition of a second AT doesn't come at a detrimental cost to your current position.

Setting the Plan in Motion

Once the AT has a clear idea in his/her head about how they will approach this issue, they need to initiate the process. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to go through proper channels when seeking to add additional staffing. If an AT does not use the chain of command and skips an important person, the AT runs the risk of having that person shoot down their proposal because they have been left out of the loop. If the AT's immediate supervisor is the athletic director or campus coordinator, a preliminary meeting should be scheduled with that person to discuss the additional staffing request. During that meeting, all of the information that the AT has previously gathered should be outlined to the immediate supervisor. The AT needs to make every attempt to keep this meeting as friendly as possible. If the meeting becomes adversarial or the AT is unable to answer several questions, the meeting should be stopped until when it can be restarted with a fresh outlook or more information is gathered.

Either before or immediately after the initial meeting, the AT should put down a proposal on paper that will be submitted for any subsequent meetings with additional supervisors. A copy should be made available for each supervisor who is met with so that they may listen to the AT and then be able to read the proposal to digest the information that is being given to them by the AT. The AT will have to judge the individual situation as to how in depth or basic their proposal needs to be. Once again, it is important that the AT realize that s/he needs to include sufficient information that the proposal is taken seriously but not so much information that the people who will be making a decision on its merits become bogged down in detail and minutia.

Assuming that the initial meeting goes well and the immediate supervisor is in agreement that additional AT staffing would benefit the athletic department, the AT or supervisor should contact the next person up the line. Depending on the school district, that person could range anywhere from the building principal to the superintendent of schools. The AT should remember that it is important to make every attempt to be as professional as possible to all people that they meet with to discuss this request. The AT is not only selling the proposal to his/her supervisors, but they are also selling themselves and their program. If the AT gives off the perception that s/he is unprofessional with dress, speech, etc., then that will reflect negatively on the program and the proposal, which could eventually doom the request to failure.

If all district supervisory personnel are in favor of this proposal, the proposal will more than likely need to be heard by the board of education for the school district. Prior to the meeting, each board member should have a prepared written copy of the proposal. The AT should be prepared to attend the board meeting where the proposal will be discussed and voted, so any question(s) that are unanswered by the written proposal can be answered by the AT. It is also very professional to show up at the meeting even if no opportunity will be given for a question-and-answer time. Attendance could go a long way to help sway a vote of any particular board member that may not have his/her mind already made up as to how to vote on this.

Patience!

One last thing that the AT needs to understand is that this process is not likely to be very fast. School districts generally do not conduct business anywhere near the speed of light. The time from the initial meeting with the immediate supervisor until ultimate approval of a proposal is given could range anywhere from a week to a year. It is very important that the AT be very patient during this entire process. Any attempt to speed up the approval process may backfire on the AT and the proposal will ultimately fail.

Outline of the Process

Evaluate the current athletic training program.

Keep track of the daily hours spent performing athletic training duties.

- Per week
- Per month
- Per season

Determine the number of treatments and evaluations performed daily.

Determine what sports and seasons are the busiest.

- Most injuries
- Most treatments
- Most practices
- Most contests
- Most hours

Determine percentage of time performing the following duties each day.

- Evaluation of injuries
- Treatment/Rehabilitation of injuries
- Cleaning and maintenance of athletic training room
- Administration and organization
- Telephone calls to parents and physicians
- Record keeping
- Inventory
- Budget

Determine the number of student athletes seen by gender.

Determine the ratio of athletes to coaches by:

- Sport
- Season
- Gender

Determine the ratio of student athletes to AT by the above criteria.

Determine the number of sports, teams and student athletes added since the AT was hired.

Determine the number of practices and home contests where the AT does not provide health care.

- “Off-campus” home contests
- Saturday or holiday practices

Present provisions for continued care in the absence of AT due to illness, professional leave, or family concerns.

Provide a cost analysis of athletic training services currently provided.

What are the advantages to the student athletes if there were more than one AT?

- Faster access to medical care
- One AT in the athletic training room, one on the practice/game field
- Improved rehabilitation and treatment of athletic injuries due to dispersal of workload
- Additional parent, coach and student athlete educational programs
- Improved preseason conditioning programs implemented by ATs
- Improved coverage of practices and contests
- Health care provided at lower-level practices/games

Recognize gender concerns.

Having ATs of both genders may increase comfort level of athletes.

- Improved “standard of care”

Determine if all sports have equal access to AT and athletic training program.

Give examples when “standard of care” could not be maintained.

- How would additional staffing alleviate that concern?

Determine whether full-time or part-time position is needed.

- Advantages versus disadvantages
- Budgetary constraints

Are teaching positions available?

Discussion

The points listed above will help to determine the strategies and rationales to be used in the proposal for additional athletic training staff. Most school boards, superintendents and administrators balk at the notion of adding staff, especially in the financial crunch that faces most school districts. They are trying to get the best possible learning environment for the student with minimal cost to the taxpayers. The lone AT must be persuasive with facts and figures organized in a concise manner. The idea of “standard of care” will peak the interest of the most inattentive administrator. If the AT can demonstrate that the “standard of care” is not equally available to all sports or genders because of constraints placed on the AT, which cannot be removed, this argument may go a long way in obtaining additional athletic training staff.

If a particular secondary school has seen many ATs come and go, then the argument of excessive hours and workload can be addressed. By spreading the load, professional burnout may be avoided and greater continuity of care, which is better for the student athlete, will be achieved.

Chapter Nine Notes

Chapter Ten – Improving Communication

Communication is a critical aspect of any athletic training program. A successful AT maintains an open line of communication with athletes, parents, administrators, coaches, team physician, and all those who are a part of the school's athletic health care network. Athletic trainers must work constantly as public relations agents for themselves and for their programs. Verbal communication such as telephone calls to parents, consultations with physicians, and meetings with administrators should take place on a regular basis. Short presentations to booster clubs or at parent meetings offer an excellent chance to highlight the benefits of having an athletic trainer at the school and to educate the public about the profession of athletic training. This also gives the ATs an opportunity to promote their own programs.

Position Job Description

Equally important to oral communication is written communication in the form of letters, guidelines, manuals, procedures, etc. One key document every AT should generate is a *Position Job Description*. This document describes the duties and responsibilities of the athletic trainer. The job description should include the qualifications and/or skills required for the position, to whom the athletic trainer reports, and a listing of general and specific job duties and responsibilities. A sample job description can be found in Appendix B.

Policies & Procedures Manual

In addition to the job description, the AT should develop a comprehensive policies and procedures manual which is specific to their individual school. A **policy** is a guiding principle used to set direction in an organization. It can be a course of action to guide and influence decisions. A **procedure** is a particular way of accomplishing something. It should be designed as a series of steps to be followed as a consistent and repetitive approach to accomplish an end result. The policy and procedure manual should be kept on file in the athletic training room, as well as with the school's administration.

Letter to Parents

A letter that includes an abbreviated version of the job description and athletic training room policies can be sent to parents (sample found in Appendix ??). This letter can be designed to educate parents about your athletic training program and the care their child will receive. It should also include pertinent information that the parents may need, including the school's telephone number, athletic training room telephone number, procedures for reporting injuries, school insurance information, and the athletic training room's hours of operation. Such a letter can serve as an excellent introduction to your program.

Additional Forms

A written job description, a policy and procedures manual, and an introductory letter to the parents are the minimal forms of communication every AT should use. In addition to these, we suggest ATs generate forms for communication with athletes, parents, coaches, physicians, and athletic training student aides. These documents would include:

- Injury Information Form
- Physician Referral Form

- Basic Injury Treatment Plan (see appendix)
- Basic Rehabilitation Plan
- Concussion Management Policies and procedures (see appendix)
- Medical Clearance for Return to Physical Activity Form
- Letter to Visiting Teams
- Athletic Training Room Rules
- Inclement weather policies and procedures

Communicating with a Parent Following an Injury/Illness

Communication with parents is especially vital after an injury or illness occurs. Do not assume or expect the student to inform the parent of the injury at all, let alone, correctly. In addition, the best way to communicate with the parents is personal contact. If you communicate with a parent about a student's injury via telephone, you may also want to send a follow-up e-mail containing the information you discussed on the phone. You may even include the *Injury Information Form* as an attachment. This not only helps to assure that the parent received the information you were attempting to communicate, but also gives you written documentation of the information you provided. The more personable and open to communication with parents you are, the happier they will be with you.

Use of Newsletters and Web-sites

The above listed documents are helpful to bridging communication between the AT and those directly involved in the athlete's well-being. Two additional methods of communication and public relations that can be used to reach a large audience are newsletters and Web sites. Most schools have in place some type of newsletter that is sent out to parents. Early in the school year, the AT can use this already existing document as a tool to introduce his/her program. Include a definition of athletic training, a brief job description, and a mission statement as a way to educate the readers. Some ATs design and send out their own newsletter that is specific to their program. This type of communication is also an excellent project in which athletic training student aides and college interns can participate.

Likewise, most schools offer Internet Web sites as a means to reach parents and other interested parties. Submitting photographs, kudos to athletic training student aides, and articles dealing with athletic training is a cost-effective and far-reaching method to promote your program. A Web site designed by the AT and staff can be even more specialized and can create positive public relations while educating the public about your program and the profession of athletic training. This Web site can also be linked with the school or district Web site. Again, student athletic training aides and interns can be involved in the design and updating of the Web site. Web sites can also be a repository for needed forms, coach and parent information and your policy and procedure manual.

Presentations to Booster Clubs & Parent Meetings

As mentioned earlier, presenting at booster club and parent meetings is an excellent way to introduce yourself and your program to parents. When presenting to parent groups, begin by introducing yourself and your staff members. Include in your introduction the certified AT staff members' educational backgrounds, the requirements for BOC certification and continuing education units, and information about state licensure (if applicable). A brief mention of the American Pediatric Association's (Lyznicki 1999) statement would be a something else to address. This will work to help assure parents that you are indeed a qualified allied health professional who must keep abreast of changes and improvements in the profession.

Give a brief description of what athletic training is and what your job description entails. Also state the athletic training room rules and procedures that are pertinent to the group you are addressing. Include in your presentation the role of athletic training student aides and college interns and highlight their accomplishments. Introduce your team physician, whether present or not. If possible, make the presentation professional by using audiovisual aids such as a PowerPoint presentation. Include a handout that addresses the school's information and athletic training room information. Be sure to include information on your athletic training department webpage if applicable. Attach your business card and business cards of your certified staff members and team physician.

An essential concept regarding presentations to parent groups is to "be prepared". Take the opportunity to address many people seriously and plan a concise presentation. This may be the first impression the parents will have of you, the AT, and it should be "professional and competent".

Communicating with Other Athletic Trainers

It is also recommended that ATs develop a line of communication with other athletic trainers in their area, as well as statewide. Communicate with the ATs of neighboring schools what to expect when they arrive on your campus. Will the AT be present? Will water and injury ice be provided? Will a physician or ambulance be present? Will athletic training student aides help transport coolers and supplies to the sidelines or greet the visiting AT? This type of information can be shared via a letter, e-mail, or a telephone call and helps alleviate problems and confusion before they arise.

Non-verbal Communication and Professionalism

Finally, nonverbal communication often has the greatest impact of any type of communication. Although athletic trainers are rarely in the limelight, they are highly visible and therefore constantly in a position to be watched or noticed by many people. Professional dress and mannerisms speak volumes about an individual. Even those who have no knowledge of athletic training recognize professionalism. Professional appearance, not only of the AT but also of the staff and students, is crucial to building a respectable and credible reputation in the community. Through their body language and speech, ATs should be perceived as caring, competent, and approachable. The manner in which an AT deals with the public, student athletes, coaches, parents, administrators and other health care professionals greatly affects the amount of success an AT will enjoy. Demeanor and appearance are excellent public relations tools.

Positive communication skills in various ways and areas are critical to effective athletic training. Open communication not only helps to build a rapport with all involved but also can be crucial to the prevention of problems. ATs should constantly look for opportunities to develop their professional image by using all avenues of communication.

The following list comprises documents or methods you may use to communicate with various audiences associated with your school. This list is by no means comprehensive. Creativity and imagination should be used when dealing with communication issues.

Communication with parents

- Sports screening forms
- Emergency treatment authorization forms
- County/district injury insurance information

Procedures for reporting an injury

Post-injury return to play authorization

Basic injury treatment plan (see appendix)
Warning signs for head injury and basic care (see appendix)
Introductory letter (see appendix)
Newsletter
Web site

Communication with student athletes

Procedures for reporting an injury

Post-injury return to play guidelines

Basic injury treatment plan (see appendix)
Warning signs for head injury and basic care (see appendix)
Introductory letter (see appendix)
Newsletter
Web site
Athletic training room rules and procedures
Athletic training room hours of operation
Return to play policy
Treatment/rehabilitation plan
Television/computer monitor in athletic training room with continuous PowerPoint slide show highlighting:

- Rules
- Daily schedule
- Injury/illness prevention strategies

Injury/illness treatment protocol and tips

Concussion Management and treatment policies and procedures

Communication with coaches

Daily injury reports
Individual status reports
Athletic training room rules and procedures
Athletic training room hours of operation
Rules/protocols for visiting schools that do not have an AT
Newsletter

Web site

Communication with physicians

Operational protocols (see appendix)
Injury report

Return to play

Treatment/rehabilitation plan
Newsletter
Web site

In most states there is now legislation concerning the proper management of concussions. The AT at your school should be the front line of managing concussions. It is important to understand the legislation within your state, and be able to communicate that to your coaches, parents and teaching staff. As part of the communication with staff, one area that is sometimes overlooked is the importance of cognitive rest and academic modifications along with physical rest.

In the words of a very successful secondary school AT: “The telephone is my most important modality”. Communication to parents, coaches, teachers, administrators, treating physicians, etc. will provide the best path to overall success as a secondary school AT.

Chapter Ten Notes

Chapter Eleven – Improving Time Management

Ideally, we like to believe that we are doing everything correctly and in the most efficient manner. This section of the *Position Improvement Guide* will help the AT determine whether s/he is making the most prudent and efficient use of his/her time. In order to be effective, this evaluation process requires athletic trainers to be very honest with themselves.

Let's examine where you are coming from. First, put yourself in the position of whomever you will hand this proposal to when it is complete. Answer a couple of the following questions (from the perspective of your employer) before you ask for ANYTHING from your supervisor.

- What do your supervisors/principals see you doing most often? Are you actively engaged in caring for students or are you are sitting on the golf cart drinking a soda and spitting seeds?
- Are you a problem-solver or a problem-causer?
- What does your office look like? Is it organized or disorganized? Are there little yellow sticky notes all over the place?
- How organized can you really be with all of that garbage all over your desk?
- Do you have a planner, or some form of time management system?
- Do you always seem to be forgetting to do stuff that should be done without a reminder from your supervisor?

Do any of these questions hit home? I hope not, but you likely found yourself reflecting about a problem you have already identified. Your supervisor sees a great deal of what you do and do not do. If all they see of you is laziness, disorganization, or other negative characteristics (or at least what they would deem negative), then the first thing you need to change is YOU! Do not let these traits be the reason that your request fails. If they see you working on things that you have identified, they will be more willing to help.

Time Management

The successful bid to change the employment status or work conditions hinges on the AT's ability to justify his/her requests. Many times, these requests are based on the AT's ability to provide quality care and coverage to all sports and activities required by the site. Many of us are just better naturally at managing or budgeting our time. Others must work to learn and master time management. This document in no way claims to be able to help you totally master this skill. At the end of this chapter, there is a suggested reading list for more complete training. This list is not intended to be complete. Feel free to use other sources at your disposal.

Different Systems and Tools

There are a number of time management books and programs/systems that can help you improve your ability to stay organized. There are also a number of issues that should be covered before you invest in such a system. First, just buying a book or system will not make you a better time manager. You must believe in what you are doing and you must do it religiously for weeks and months so that it becomes habit and part of you. If you do not, then you are wasting money and, more importantly, time. Good habits are tough to build and easy to break. If you let down your guard for a week, you have to start relearning those behaviors all over again. Do not adopt a system on the suggestion of a friend without investigating a number of things, primarily cost. Your friend's system is not

necessarily the best one for you – do your own research as if you were buying a car or a house. Many systems are excellent tools and resources; they can also be expensive.

Caveat Emptor

Just because you are more efficient and have found more time does not mean that someone else can fill it for you! Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent. Never give it." This concept applies to time management as well. Many times those who create positive change in their lives through time management find that they only fill the available time with more stuff to do. Once you have created that extra time, or positive change, make sure that you protect it. That is what you worked so hard to secure. No one can force you to do extra work without your consent. Be wary when you give it.

Record Your Activities

Time management can provide an incredible amount of ammunition for any proposal. It is imperative that when making a proposal the AT *know* exactly how much time is spent on everything that is done in the course of his/her employment each day. For example, many ATs say that there just is not enough time to do what they need to do each day – but can they prove it? Most employers pay you for at least 8 hours every day; you have to show them that they are asking for 10, 12 or even 14 hours' worth of work to make any change (see *Time Budget Analysis*).

The first exercise in time management is to do the research that can prove how much time you are spending on your various responsibilities each day. Therefore, for a specified time period (days or, even better, weeks), the AT writes down what s/he is doing every 10 minutes all day long. The idea is not to change what you are doing but just track it. After a while you will be able to look back and see where it is that you have spent your time. The chart on the following page is provided to give you an idea of what to track and how to track various activities.

For instance, time spent will be different between the fall, winter, spring and summer seasons based on sport requirements. Ensure that you know what your time expenses are for each season.

Working in Reverse

In his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, Stephen Covey (Convey, 1989), titles the chapter describing the second habit as "Begin with the End in Mind." Rarely do those who begin a journey to a particular place begin without using a road map to help them get there. But the map does them no good without a destination. Identify your goal or destination and then make sure that everything you do is aimed at that goal. What is it that you want to make happen? Identify those things that will need to transpire in order to make the end goal a reality. Look at all routes available to you as you plan your course.

Mapquest.com (MapQuest.com 2003), a popular mapping Web site, allows the user to type in an address to obtain a map to the desired destination as well as driving directions to get there. Interestingly, at the time of the writing of this manual, there were three options for directions. The first was the quickest, the second the shortest and the third avoided highways. All three choices got the user to the destination, though by different paths. As an AT it is important for you to identify the most effective path for you to take in achieving your goals.

Chapter Twelve – Improving Policies/Procedures in your Athletic Training Program

Written policies and procedures are essential to the success of any organization. They serve as the “road map” for the organization and those who work within it. With appropriate written policies and procedures, the AT is helping to assure accountability for themselves and for their program. Without written policies and procedures, the AT and their employer(s) expose themselves to enormous legal liability and increase the difficulty of defending themselves against accusations of negligence, malfeasance, improper professional conduct, or a violation of ethical standards.

It is recommended that policy and procedure documents always be considered as “guidelines” for the professional AT in the secondary school setting and not as *protocols*. Referring to the document as a guideline allows the AT to customize the document to fit the needs of their specific program (in instances of a school district with one or more schools employing ATs). Protocols tend to be more restrictive in nature and may be construed in a different way legally.

As described previously in Chapter Ten, a **policy** is a guiding principle used to set direction of an organization. It can be a course of action to guide and influence decisions. A **procedure** is a particular way of accomplishing something. It should be designed as a series of steps to be followed as a consistent and repetitive approach to accomplish an end result.

Suggested/recommended contents of the policies and procedures document

Statement of purpose

Why is this document necessary? What are the primary reasons for the document's existence? For whom is the document intended?

Regulations governing the practice of athletic training in your state

Does your state have an athletic trainer practice act? If so, a copy of the practice act should be included in your policies and procedures document to demonstrate that the AT and their employer(s) are aware of the existence of the law and that s/he is practicing under the guidelines set forth in that law. You may also want to include a copy of the *NATA Code of Ethics*, since this serves as a guideline for ethical standards for athletic trainers. Add link to the NATA Code of Ethics document.

Athletic trainer job descriptions

Every AT employed by a school system or a contracted provider should have a written job description. This job description should be included in the policy and procedure document. Also job descriptions for assistant ATs, volunteer assistants, student-interns and high school athletic training student aides should be included here.

Also included in this portion of the document should be any specific job requirements not previously outlined as part of your state's practice act. These can be things such as 1) possessing a teaching credential; 2) possessing current CPR/AED/first aid certification; and 3) possessing other credentials as required by your employer(s).

Professional performance evaluation procedures and sample evaluation instrument

This section of the document should outline how ATs will be evaluated. Included should

be information on how often evaluations will occur, when the evaluations will occur; who performs the evaluations, what is considered to be a “passing” and “failing” evaluation, what actions will be taken when an AT does not receive a favorable evaluation; and what recourse the AT has for disputing their evaluation and/or correcting their deficiencies.

A sample copy of the evaluation instrument should be included in this section of the policies and procedures document or as an appendix at the end of the document (A sample evaluation document is included in the Inter-Association Consensus Statement on Best Practices for Sports Medicine Management for Secondary Schools and Colleges)

Team physician roles, responsibilities, standing orders, documents

Outlined in this section of the document should be information pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of your team physician(s). What is the team physician responsible for specifically? What is the role of the team physician in caring for and treating your student-athletes?

Any written standing orders should also be included in this section of the document or as an appendix at the end of the document. These orders should be signed and dated by the physician and include the name(s) of the AT(s) who are covered by the orders.

Any documents that are used to exchange information between the physician and the AT should also be outlined in this section. These may include referral forms, report forms, rehabilitation forms, etc. Examples of these forms can be included in this section of the document or as appendices at the end of the document.

Athletic event and practice coverage policies and guidelines

This section of the document should include information on what athletic events and practices will be covered by the AT(s) and when. It should also include brief explanations for why certain sports will receive coverage by the AT over other sports.

It is important to note that these policies and guidelines should be able to be supported with appropriate documentation. For example, the AT can justify covering football practice instead of tennis practice because injury statistics show that there is a much higher risk of injury in football than there is in tennis. This fact would need to be clearly explained when outlining coverage policies and procedures in the document.

Also included should be information regarding coverage policies for regularly scheduled school holidays, tournaments, off-season conditioning sessions, etc.

Athletic Training room policies, procedures, and guidelines

This section of the document should include the specific policies, procedures, and guidelines for the athletic training room. What are the athletic training room rules? What are the athletic training room hours? When are regularly scheduled treatment times? What procedures will be followed when an injured athlete presents to the athletic training room? Is there a hierarchy established as to the priority in which those seeking evaluation or treatment are attended? Is it first come, first served? Do varsity sports take precedence over lower level teams? Do in-season sports have priority over those not in-season?

Guidelines and policies regarding the use of medications

What are the guidelines for the distribution and use of medications by the AT in your school district or state? Are ATs allowed to keep and to distribute over the counter medications to student athletes in the school? If so, what procedures must be followed? What type of documentation or permission form is required for the AT to give medication to a student-athlete? How will medication be distributed and by whom? How will medications be secured? How will the distribution of medications be documented? What medications are the AT be allowed to distribute? All of these questions should be answered in this section of the policies and procedures document.

Emergency guidelines and procedures for injured/ill athletes

This section of the document should provide specific information for how injured/ill athletes will be cared for by the AT. Also included in this section should be an overview of the various responsibilities of all parties involved in the emergency plan for the organization. Specifically, who will be in charge of activating EMS; meeting EMS personnel at the scene; contacting parents; accompanying the student to the hospital/physician; contacting school district administrative personnel, etc.

It may be advisable to include a copy of the school's Emergency Action Plan (EAP) in the policies and procedures document. The Emergency Action Plan should include information pertaining to the following:

- Ambulance coverage for athletic contests (which events/sports? what times?)
- Procedure for activating the local EMS system in the absence of an ambulance
- Role and responsibilities of team physicians, athletic trainers, and coaches in an emergency
- Procedure for notifying parents/guardians and/or family members of injured student/staff
- Procedure for notifying appropriate school administrative personnel
- A method of "debriefing" for all personnel involved in the emergency
- Transportation guidelines and procedures for injured/ill athletes. How are student athletes who do *not* have life-threatening injuries/illnesses but which require emergency medical care transported to a physician, urgent care or hospital emergency room?
- Venue-specific guidelines which include location of emergency equipment (AED), nearest phone, emergency phone numbers, and directions to that location.

The various methods of transportation should be outlined in order of priority with the student's parent/guardian being the first choice. After the parents, the choices may include transportation by the AT, by a member of the coaching staff, by another parent or responsible adult, etc. Transportation methods will also be determined by local policy regarding the transportation of students.

Policy guidelines regarding pre-participation physicals, return to play criteria, and disqualifications

This section of the document should specifically outline what the regulations are regarding pre-participation physicals. It should include information about your state high school activity association/league's rules regarding pre-participation physicals, including dates that the physical is valid, who is recognized by the state association to conduct the physical examination, etc.

If your local school district rules differ in any way from state regulations, these rules should also be specifically outlined in this section of your document. For example, perhaps your school district requires that physical exams may only be conducted by a physician, while the state association/league allows for other medical providers such as chiropractors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, etc., to conduct pre-participation physical examinations.

Guidelines for return to play should also be included in this section of your document. Included in this information should be who has the authority to make return to play decisions, along with information concerning who has the *ultimate* authority in such situations — be it the athletic trainer, team physician, family physician, etc.

Disqualification criteria should also be contained in this section of your guidelines. What conditions warrant disqualification from participation in athletics? How will disqualifications be determined? What criteria will be used? What recourse does the student-athlete and their parents have to appeal a disqualification?

Documentation and record-keeping procedures

This portion of the document should outline the various types of documentation that the AT will be required to keep as part of his/her responsibilities as the athletic trainer for the school. These documents may include individual athlete records such as physical forms, injury reports, insurance information and documents, physician reports, referral records, etc. The document should also outline how these records will be stored and secured per local, state, and federal regulations regarding patient privacy. This may also include such things as a daily treatment log, inventory logs, coaches' reports, medication logs, copies of invoices and/or purchase orders for equipment and documentation of maintenance on modalities and other equipment in the athletic training room.

It is also advisable to include in this section the procedures that should be followed by the AT, coaching staff, and school staff in the case of catastrophic injury or death of an athlete. How will evidence of the injury be preserved? Who will secure this evidence? What kind of evidence possession chain will be established? How will the incident be documented and reported? Who is the contact person for informing and dealing with the media? Is it the principal/head of school, the AD, the SID, or school superintendent?

A method for regular reporting to supervisory personnel should also be included in the document. This reporting process may be done on a weekly, monthly, or yearly basis and should outline what activities have occurred in the athletic training room over the previous time period. Reports may include a summary of injuries seen, treatment totals, number of athlete visits to the athletic training room, cost analysis, etc. Also included in this section will be who the report is distributed and made available to.

Weather and lightening policies and guidelines

This section should include specific procedures that should be followed in the event of severe weather or lightening. Who is responsible for making the call to leave the field and seek shelter? How will this be communicated to those outside? Who determines when it is safe to resume activities? It should also outline what are considered to be safe and unsafe shelters in the event of severe weather. Also, the procedures for reporting or dealing with coaches or other staff members who fail to follow the policy guidelines should be included here.

This portion of the document should also address severe heat and severe cold issues as well. It may be helpful to include a chart or recommendations for when athletes should either take precautions or not be allowed to participate at all because of these weather extremes.

Policies and guidelines for dealing with special considerations

This section should include information on how you handle athletes with conditions such as asthma, diabetes, severe food, drug, or insect allergies (anaphylaxis), skin conditions in wrestlers, or epilepsy. You should include information on the administration of such medications as an inhaler or Epi-pen. Who is allowed to administer these medications? Is a prescription or standing order required? What are your procedures for allowing athletes with diabetes to perform periodic testing of their blood glucose levels? Are athletes with any of these conditions required to have on file action plans for you to follow in the event they suffer an episode?

Injury management policies/procedures

In some situations, ATs may be required to outline specific treatment and/or rehab procedures or protocols for the injuries/illnesses that athletes may report to the athletic trainer. These procedures and protocols should be specifically outlined in this section of the document

Policy/procedure guidelines for the use of therapeutic modalities

Outlined in this section of the document should be the policies and procedures that are to be followed as it pertains to the use of therapeutic modalities in the athletic training room. You should include information on what therapeutic modalities are available, what their general purpose is, who is qualified to use them (and how s/he is qualified or become qualified), what documentation (if any) is required to provide a therapeutic modality to an athlete (such as a prescription from a physician) and what the indications and contraindications are for use of these modalities.

Budget and inventory guidelines and purchasing procedures

What procedures are to be followed by the AT for keeping an accurate inventory of training room equipment and supplies? When will this documentation take place and to whom is the information submitted, if anyone?

What procedures are to be followed in regard to purchasing equipment and supplies for the athletic training room? The exact, step-by-step procedures should be outlined here. In many cases, these procedures will already be outlined under normal school district purchasing policies.

Polices and guidelines for blood borne pathogens and infectious diseases

It is extremely important in these days and times that a clear policy is established as to how blood borne pathogens and infectious diseases will be dealt with by the AT and the entire athletic training staff.

Included in this section of the document should be specific information on *who* is allowed to deal with blood borne pathogens and who is not; what training individuals must have to be qualified to deal with blood borne pathogens; who will be required to obtain vaccinations against blood borne pathogens and how they will obtain those vaccinations; the specific procedure(s) that is to be followed when dealing with blood or other body fluids; and the procedures for dealing with and reporting an accidental exposure to blood

or body fluids.

Dos and Don'ts

The following are some simple "do's and don'ts" that the AT should adhere to when developing their policy and procedure guideline document:

1. Generalize all policies and guidelines and avoid specifics whenever possible. This will allow "wobble room" for individual ATs in a school district that may have different circumstances in each individual school.

2. Be sure to have the document reviewed by all individuals who will be affected by the document before it is finalized and approved for use. For example, if your school district employs multiple athletic trainers, ALL of them should be in agreement over the document if it is to be followed by everyone in the district.

Note: If this is the case, it is highly recommended that each AT follow the same general document and that separate documents are not used because of the danger of these documents being used against one another in legal proceedings.

3. The document should be reviewed and approved by your school principal, athletic director and team physician before it becomes final.

4. The document should be reviewed and approved by your school district's legal staff to be sure there is nothing in the document that could leave the AT or the school district open to liability or legal claim.

5. The document should be reviewed and approved by your school district administration and/or the district board of education.

6. Regularly review and update policies and guidelines to reflect changes in professional standards and expectations.

Chapter Twelve Notes

Chapter Thirteen – Recruiting and Maintaining Quality Team Physicians

One of the most important things any AT can do is to establish a good relationship with his/her supervising physician. For secondary school athletic trainers, the value of a quality team physician cannot be underestimated. These relationships are not a given – they must be cultivated and nurtured from the beginning of an AT's tenure with the doctor. Maintaining a good relationship and two-way communication with the team physician is a simple way to enhance your athletic training position.

What is a Team Physician?

The team physician is the individual who is responsible for treating and coordinating the medical care of all other athletic team members (Team Physician Consensus Statement – AOASM, 2000). S/he must have an unrestricted medical license (MD or DO) as well as:

- A fundamental knowledge of emergency care regarding sporting events
- CPR/first aid certification
- A working knowledge of trauma, musculoskeletal injuries and other medical conditions affecting the adolescent athlete

Types of Physicians

There are a variety of medical specialties that may qualify a doctor to be an athletic team physician. Types of physicians (and their positive and negative aspects from a team physician standpoint) include:

Orthopedic Surgeons

- Having an orthopedist on the sidelines of a game is considered by many to be the gold standard for team physician care.
- Orthopedic injuries can be diagnosed immediately and referred if necessary.
- A drawback is that if a non-orthopedic problem occurs, the physician may not be comfortable dealing with it.
- The availability of quality orthopedic surgeons for high school team physician coverage may be limited.

Family Physicians

- The value of a family physician varies greatly, depending on his/her experience.
- His/her orthopedic background must be strong.
- S/he should have an athletic background to temper what could potentially be an ultraconservative approach to sports injuries.

Osteopaths

- An osteopathic physician with a sound background in sports medicine is a good option for team physician.
- An osteopath has an orthopedic background as well as skills in muscle energy and manipulation.
- Appropriately trained, s/he is a very good cross between an orthopedist and a family physician.

Maintaining Relationships

Once a secondary school AT establishes a rapport with his/her physician, it's necessary to take steps to maintain and enhance that relationship. If the physician does not feel appreciated or welcomed, s/he may not continue to volunteer time with your program.

Here are some recommendations to maintain the relationships built with your team physicians:

- Ensure s/he is properly orientated to the duties/expectations of the job
- Introduce him/her to your key staff and athletes
- Offer encouragement often
- Show Respect at all times
- Keep it interesting
- Make him/her feel like part of the team.

Most team physicians do not participate in your program for the money – they do it because they like the kids and want to feel like they are a part of the team or school. Enhance that feeling by including him/her in uniform purchases for the athletic training program. Collared shirts or jackets with the school logo can be much more valuable than any stipend that they would receive.

Recognize the physician in front of peers and the public. Many doctors don't publicize the fact that they also volunteer time as team physicians. They do, however, take pride in their association with the school. Cultivate that by inviting your team physician to banquets and recognizing his/her efforts at every opportunity. If s/he is unable to attend, acknowledge them anyway – word will get back to your physician, who will be quite appreciative.

Be organized and communicate. Always communicate with them about dates, times and locations of games or events where they are expected to be. Give him/her a game schedule (along with directions, if applicable) as soon as it is available. Offer to carpool or give them a ride if it is possible. Also, make sure your physician can get into your games. Create passes for all home games and if possible, away games (similar to the staff or student passes used at the school). This will identify the physician and provide him/her with VIP access to your contests. If possible, designate a reserved parking spot in a desirable location. This will allow him/her to park close and not get tied up before the beginning of a game.

Evaluating and Removing Team Physicians

This is an aspect of athletic training that is never easy. How can one fire someone who is volunteering his/her time and may have done so for many years? This question is difficult to answer, but if your physician is not meeting your expectations, it can make the AT look bad and jeopardize the perceptions of the entire program.

First, the expectations of the team physician must be available, approved by the school administration and acknowledged by the team physician. The Athletic Director or Principal should be included in a meeting to communicate your expectations. A common source of friction or problems with the physician is arrival and departure times from games. Make sure the physician is clear on your expectations here because games may not be able to start if the physician is not present.

The AT must also understand the expectations the physician may have of the school and the athletic training program. Are athletes able to be seen on a walk-in basis or are there only certain times they may be seen? Is there a fee associated with evaluation or treatment? If so, is it consistent or does it depend on the athlete's insurance? Will the physician cover athletes' x-ray needs? It is very helpful to have these issues discussed, ironed out and, if possible, written down so there is no confusion between parties. This is

a great way to avoid unnecessary friction or frustration.

If your team physician is not meeting the expectations and you feel a change is necessary, then MAKE THE CHANGE! Don't put yourself in a position where your team physician makes you and your program look bad. There are many good physicians who would enjoy being a part of your program.

To let a physician go, try following these steps:

- 1) Gather your evidence. These decisions should not be made on a whim. Document the things that you are not satisfied with and keep them on file.
- 2) Make sure the documentation is factual and not perceptual. Dealing with facts makes difficult decisions much easier to face.
- 3) Make sure your administration is on board with your decision. Their support may be crucial.
- 4) Meet with the physician to discuss the problems you are having. Give him/her an opportunity to change or adjust things to more clearly reflect your expectations.
- 5) If changes are not made or the physician is not willing to compromise, then it may be necessary to go your separate ways. Avoid confrontation if at all possible. A letter thanking them for their time and energy but stating that you "wish to go in another direction" is appropriate.

Remember, your team physician has probably received as much from the association with your school as you have from him/her. Don't feel like s/he is "owed" anything for their time volunteered if things are not the way you need them to be. These are business decisions and should be treated as such. They may be difficult at first, but in the long run you and your program will be better for it.

Chapter Thirteen Notes

APPENDIX A

Sample Proposal for Change in the Athletic Training Program (example used will be full-time teaching to reduced teaching load)

Statement of the Problem

There are many advantages of providing an athletic program in the secondary school setting. Yet, with participation in athletics, there comes an inherent risk of injury (Comstock, Collins & Currie, 2013). The attached injury reports and treatment records support this. Providing comprehensive health care to high school is multi-dimensional as supported in the *Consensus Statement on Appropriate Medical Care for Secondary School-Aged Athletes* (see attached). While serving in the two positions of _____ teaching and AT has been rewarding and challenging, the time commitment of an average of _____ hours per week required to perform both duties is exhausting. In addition, the time available to provide athletic health care and supervising athletic training student aides is insufficient to fulfill the obligations recommended through my education as an AT, as well as the *Consensus Statement*.

_____ School District is a strong proponent of students and student health and recognizes that the health and welfare of student-athletes is an essential component of the athletic program. Therefore, in an effort to improve the current level of athletic health care our student athletes are provided, an extensive fact finding project has been completed.

Proposed Solution

Reducing the teaching load (insert your request here) will change the weekly average from _____ to _____, thus providing a more reasonable schedule for career-oriented professionals. It will also provide the opportunity for the AT to provide a more comprehensive delivery of injury prevention, immediate emergency care, injury evaluation, rehabilitation/reconditioning and record keeping.

Estimated Costs

Salary	\$ _____	(includes benefits)
Stipend for extra hours	\$ _____	
Expendable supplies	\$ _____	
Capital equipment	\$ _____	
Facility renovation/remodel	\$ _____	
Total cost to high school	\$ _____	

APPENDIX B

Sample Position Description: Athletic Trainer

General Statement of Duties

The position of athletic trainer is a full school year position. The duties of the athletic trainer include, but are not limited to, prevention of athletic injuries, recognition, evaluation and immediate care of athletic injuries, rehabilitation and reconditioning of athletic injuries, health care administration and professional development and responsibility as specified in the *Domains of the NATA Certified Athletic Trainer*. The athletic trainer serves as a liaison between physicians, coaches, athletes and parents. The athletic trainer ensures that players participate only when physically able and that any physician instructions are understood and followed. The athletic trainer will coordinate with the activities/athletic director to ensure that the athletes have access to athletic health care.

Position Requirements

1. The athletic trainer must be certified by the Board of Certification (BOC) and maintain the standards established by the National Athletic Trainers Association's (NATA) role delineation study. Additionally, the athletic trainer must obtain and maintain, in good standing, state licensure (if applicable) as an athletic trainer.
2. The athletic trainer must be a member in good standing with NATA, the local NATA district and the state athletic trainers' association.

Specific Duties

In cooperation with the principal and the activities/athletics director, the certified athletic trainer should:

1. Develop plans for providing athletic health care at interscholastic athletic events identified in *Athletic Training Program Coverage Policy and AMCSSAA*.
2. Establish daily hours of operation for the athletic training room.
3. Develop a comprehensive emergency plan for their specific facilities and venues.
4. Initiate and administer an athletic training student aide program in accordance with the schools clubs and activities guidelines, following NATA and state standards.
5. Establish a working relationship with a designated team physician and community physicians.
6. Complete (school system's) *Blood borne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan* training and comply with the regulations therein.
7. Maintain adequate medical quality records on all injuries and rehabilitation procedures, including concussion baseline testing and tracking, and wrestling weight management records.
8. Comply with any and all policies regarding health care delivery as indicated by the (school system) regulations and outlined in the *Athletic Training Program Policies and Procedures Manual*.

Sample Position Description: Athletic Trainer/Educator

Certified Athletic Trainer (AT) Job Responsibilities:

The AT will provide coverage for home contests on a schedule cooperatively determined by athletic trainer and athletic director, as well as cover most varsity contests, non-varsity contests in football and varsity football away-games. Varsity and selected non-varsity contests will be covered based on the risk of the sports and the availability of the athletic trainer during a particular sport season.

Practice coverage will be determined by athletic trainer and athletic director and will typically include daily coverage of varsity and non-varsity sports. This coverage will be based on injury risk of the sport and other mutually agreed on factors.

The AT will cover selected postseason contests as determined by the athletic trainer and athletic director.

The AT will provide for the prevention of athletic injuries through the application of protective tapings, wraps and braces and assist in the design of practices to help to reduce the incidence of injury.

The AT will advise coaches of flexibility, strengthening and conditioning programs to help prevent injuries and optimize performance.

The AT will provide immediate care of athletic injuries and refer the athlete to medical facilities when necessary.

The AT will assess, monitor, refer, and follow-up athletes who are suspected of sustaining concussions or other traumatic brain injuries, and document such actions.

The AT will design and supervise rehabilitation programs for athletic injuries under the direction of a referring physician.

Medical histories and correspondence will also be kept on file in the athletic training room. The athletic trainer will maintain accurate medical records for injuries, treatment, rehabilitation, and physician referrals.

The AT will abide by FERPA and HIPAA guidelines regarding private medical information and student care records.

The AT will be responsible for budgeting, ordering and inventorying athletic training supplies.

The AT will supervise athletic training student aides from the athletic training program.

The AT will counsel and advise athletes on health related issues, including nutrition and substance abuse.

The AT will, as requested, conduct sports medicine workshops for the district's coaches and other interested parties. These workshops will include information on

injury prevention, basic first aid and CPR, injury recognition and treatment and injury rehabilitation. In addition they will provide specific information on concussion and heat illness recognition, blood borne pathogens, HIV/AIDS, the district's *Sports Medicine Protocols* and other health-related topics.

The AT may serve as a consultant to the middle school athletic program by advising middle school athletes in the athletic training room on an appointment basis.

The AT may advise and assist with equipment purchases and fittings.

The AT maintains open channels of communication with coaches, parents, physicians, and other health professionals regarding athletic injuries, treatment and rehabilitation.

The AT may market the athletic training program within the school district and the medical community through newsletters, brochures, media contacts, etc.

The AT is responsible to the athletic director and is supervised by the consulting (team) physician(s).

The AT/educator should be given release time in consideration for the additional hours worked in providing sports medical care to athletes and supervising athletic training student aides after regular school hours.

APPENDIX C

Athletic Trainer Evaluation Samples

Head Athletic Trainer Evaluation Form

Completing the Evaluation Form

1. The evaluation form contains 31 items, each scored on a scale of 1 to 5.
2. If an item is not observed at your facility, circle Not Observed (N/O). Not observed will not penalize the athletic trainer, but do not make extensive use of this category.
3. Please justify the use of 1 and 5 in scoring an athletic trainer's competency on any item. (*Do not routinely use 5; this should be for only exceptional competency by the athletic trainer.*)
4. When scoring the evaluation, use the following as indicators of the athletic trainer's performance.

(1) POOR	(Performs adequately 0% to 20% of the time)
(2) NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	(Performs adequately 21% to 50% of the time)
(3) AVERAGE	(Performs adequately 51% to 80% of the time.)
(4) GOOD	(Performs adequately 81% to 90% of the time)
(5) EXCELLENT	(Performs adequately 91% to 100% of the time)
(N/O) NOT OBSERVED	

5. The performance will be evaluated by:
 - Principal, his/her designee and/or Athletic Director;
 - School or Team physician
 - School Nurse
6. Maximum possible score is 155, which is expected only of athletic trainers exceptional in every area. Normal competence in every area is 124. Minimal overall passing score is 108 when all items are scored. N/O will be factored in on the evaluation to balance out the score.

Head Athletic Trainer Evaluation Form

Athletic Trainer: _____

School: _____

Evaluator: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Evaluation scale: Circle the appropriate number from the scale for each of the following items listed.

- (1) POOR
- (2) NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
- (3) AVERAGE
- (4) GOOD
- (5) EXCELLENT,
- (N/O) NOT OBSERVED

I. PERSONAL / PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES:

1. Communicates with coaches and parents to facilitate the overall effectiveness of the athletic program. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
2. Appropriately utilizes feedback and constructive criticism from supervisors, coaches and parents. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
3. Continually strives to grow and develop professionally. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
4. Manages personal and professional issues so they do not interfere with performance of duties. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
5. Adheres to the policies and procedures of the facility. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
6. Completes assignments dependably and punctually. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
7. Shows initiative in performing duties. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
8. Demonstrates good work habits and work ethic. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
9. Effectively utilizes human resources for the most effective health care coverage of the athletic program. (Athletic healthcare prioritized appropriately at practices/games.) 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
10. Reports to work on time and stays until completion of the practice or event. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
11. Maintains appropriate professional appearance. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
12. Establishes, promotes and supervises an athletic training student aide program and promotes a positive atmosphere for student assistants. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
13. Communicates with supervisors and subordinates in a professional manner. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

14. Places the well-being of the athlete above winning and does not sacrifice principles to win. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

15. Exhibits sportsmanship in dealing with officials, coaches and visiting teams. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

16. Maintains appropriate relationships with athletes. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

17. Appropriately supports the coaching staff and athletic program within the school and community. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

Total Score for this section = _____

COMMENTS:

II. ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROCEDURAL ABILITIES:

1. Maintains accurate written records as appropriate and required. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

2. Maintains equipment, supplies and treatment areas in good order. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

3. Adheres to budget policy, works within budget constraints and effectively uses monies budgeted for supplies and equipment. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

4. Assists coaches in enforcement of team rules in an equitable and consistent manner. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

5. Maintains control and discipline of student athletes in the athletic training facility. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

Total Score for this section = _____

COMMENTS:

III. ATHLETIC TRAINING SKILLS AND ABILITIES

1. Exhibits reasonable and prudent conduct in preventing and treating athletic injuries. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

2. Demonstrates the ability to assess injuries and refer if needed to the appropriate medical personnel. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

3. Follows the advice of physicians and medical consultants regarding participation of injured student athletes.

1 2 3 4 5 N/O

4. Demonstrates the ability to establish and adjust a treatment program for injured student athletes.

1 2 3 4 5 N/O

5. Recognizes potential injury situations and intervenes appropriately.

1 2 3 4 5 N/O

6. Has the confidence of the coaching staff when assessing athletic injuries, planning treatment and in handling emergency situations.

1 2 3 4 5 N/O

7. Establishes and implements appropriate athletic training room procedures.

1 2 3 4 5 N/O

8. Maintains a clean and sanitary athletic training room.

1 2 3 4 5 N/O

9. Demonstrates competence in the clinical domains of athletic training, which include prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of athletic injuries.

1 2 3 4 5 N/O

Total Score for this section = _____

COMMENTS:

Total Score for all sections = _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS:

Date evaluation completed: _____

Signature of Evaluator: _____

Evaluator Title: _____

Athletic Trainer Evaluation - Assistant Athletic Trainer

Completing the Evaluation Form

1. The evaluation form contains 29 items, each scored on a scale of 1 to 5.
2. If an item is not observed at your facility circle Not Observed (N/O). Not observed will not penalize the athletic trainer, but do not make extensive use of this category.
3. Please justify the use of 1 and 5 in scoring an athletic trainer's competency on any item. *(Do not routinely use 5, this should be for only exceptional competency by the athletic trainer).*
4. When scoring the evaluation, use the following as indicators of the athletic trainer's performance.

(1) POOR	(Performs adequately 0% to 20% of the time.)
(2) NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	(Performs adequately 21% to 50% of the time.)
(3) AVERAGE	(Performs adequately 51% to 80% of the time.)
(4) GOOD	(Performs adequately 81% to 90% of the time.)
(5) EXCELLENT	(Performs adequately 91% to 100% of the time.)
(N/O) NOT OBSERVED	

5. The performance will be evaluated by:
 - Principal, his/her designee and/or Athletic Director;
 - School or Team physician
 - School Nurse
 - Head Athletic Trainer
6. Maximum possible score is 145, which is expected only of athletic trainers exceptional in every area. Normal competence in every area is 124. Minimal overall passing score is 108 when all items are scored. N/O will be factored in on the evaluation to balance out the score.

Assistant Athletic Trainer Evaluation Form

Athletic Trainer: _____

School: _____

Evaluator: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Evaluation scale: Circle the appropriate number from the scale for each of the following items listed.

- (1) POOR
- (2) NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
- (3) AVERAGE
- (4) GOOD
- (5) EXCELLENT
- (N/O) NOT OBSERVED

I. PERSONAL / PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES:

1. Appropriately utilizes feedback and constructive criticism from supervisors, coaches and parents. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
2. Continually strives to grow and develop professionally. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
3. Manages personal and professional issues so they do not interfere with performance of duties. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
4. Adheres to the policies and procedures of the facility. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
5. Completes assignments dependably and promptly. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
6. Shows initiative in performing duties. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
7. Demonstrates good work habits and work ethic. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
8. Reports to work on time and stays until completion of the practice or event. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
9. Maintains appropriate professional appearance. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
10. Establishes, promotes and supervises an athletic training student aide program and promotes a positive atmosphere for student assistants. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
11. Communicates with supervisors and subordinates in a professional manner. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
12. Places the well-being of the athlete above winning and does not sacrifice principles to win. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
13. Exhibits sportsmanship in dealing with officials, coaches and visiting teams. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O
14. Maintains appropriate relationships with student athletes. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

15. Appropriately supports the coaching staff and athletic program within the school and community. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

Total Score for this section = _____

COMMENTS:

II. ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROCEDURAL ABILITIES:

1. Maintains accurate written records as appropriate and required. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

2. Maintains equipment, supplies and treatment areas in good order. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

3. Adheres to budget policy, works within budget constraints and effectively uses monies budgeted for supplies and equipment. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

4. Assists coaches in enforcement of team rules in an equitable and consistent manner. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

5. Maintains control and discipline of student athletes in the athletic training facility. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

Total Score for this section = _____

COMMENTS:

III. ATHLETIC TRAINING SKILLS AND ABILITIES

1. Exhibits reasonable and prudent conduct in preventing and treating athletic injuries. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

2. Demonstrates the ability to assess injuries and refer if needed to the appropriate medical personnel. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

3. Follows the advice of physicians and medical consultants regarding participation of injured student athletes. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

4. Demonstrates the ability to establish and adjust a treatment program for injured student athletes. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

5. Recognizes potential injury situations and intervene appropriately. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

6. Has the confidence of the coaching staff when assessing athletic injuries, planning treatment and in handling emergency situations. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

7. Establishes and implements appropriate athletic training room procedures. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

8. Maintains a clean and sanitary athletic training room. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

9. Demonstrates competence in the clinical domains of athletic training, which includes prevention, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of athletic injuries. 1 2 3 4 5 N/O

Total Score for this section = _____

COMMENTS: _____

Total Score for all sections = _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS: _____

Date evaluation completed: _____

Signature of Evaluator: _____

Evaluator Title: _____

APPENDIX D
Sample Communications

Athletic Training Room Rules

THESE ARE RULES YOU MUST ABIDE BY IN ORDER TO RECEIVE TREATMENT AND BE ALLOWED IN THE ATHLETIC TRAINING ROOM.

No cleats, candy, gum, food or drinks.

No socializing or "hanging out."

You must sign in each time you come in for treatment.

The only reasons an athlete should be in the athletic training room are: 1) to receive treatment for an injury, or 2) to turn in paperwork.

Athletes are NOT allowed to use the athletic training room restroom or telephone.

No PROFANITY or other inappropriate language is allowed. IF YOU CHOOSE TO USE PROFANITY, YOU WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!!!

Come to treatment every day until released by the athletic trainer.

If you do not come to treatment you will not be taped.

If you do not come to treatment you will not be excused from practice.

Inform the head athletic trainer of your injury as soon as possible after it occurs.

Ankles must be shaved before you will be taped.

If you seek medical attention for an injury you must bring a written doctor's release before you will be allowed to return to participation.

Be on time or you will not receive treatment.

Be courteous and respectful to the athletic training student aides who help you.

Be respectful to each other.

Be respectful to coaches and athletic trainers.

Criteria for Lettering in Athletic Training

In order to earn a varsity letter as an athletic trainer student aide the student must:

- Participate as a full-time athletic trainer student aide (10 hrs/week minimum) during two seasons of the year (seasons defined as Fall sports, Winter sports, or Spring sports).
- Participate as a full-time athletic training student aide during preseason football (Aug. to first game) and /or spring football (May 1 to spring jamboree).
- Cover practices for the team to which you are assigned. Traveling is optional, but encouraged.
- Participate in the daily duties involved in athletic training room upkeep, cleaning and record keeping.
- Participate in all fund-raising activities.
- Return all Athletic Training equipment or clothing. (T-shirts are \$10 each if not returned or ruined).
- Perform all duties to the satisfaction of the head and assistant athletic trainers.

(Please tear off this portion, sign and return to _____.)

By signing this I acknowledge that I have read the above rules and procedures and I agree to abide by them during the _____ school year.

Athletic Training Student Aide's signature

Date

Parent's signature

Date

Head Injury Care

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child _____ reported a head injury to the athletic trainer at _____ High School. He/she was evaluated by the athletic trainer and no significant loss of neurological function or altered level of consciousness was found. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of your child's injury so that you can monitor him/her until a full recovery is made. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me.

CARE OF HEAD INJURY

- Your child should be watched carefully at home for the next 12-24 hours.
- Avoid strenuous physical or academic activities for at least 24 hours after injury.
- Apply an ice bag to the area of swelling intermittently for 24 hours.
- For headache, use a non-aspirin medication as long as your child has no allergies or ill-effects when taking it.
- Unless otherwise instructed, the child should be observed closely over the next 24 hours and asked simple questions.
- Report to the athletic trainer the next school day.

Please be aware that head injury symptoms can occur days, weeks, or even months after the original injury. If you notice any changes in behavior or an increase or onset of symptoms please seek medical attention.

IF YOUR CHILD EXPERIENCES ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CALL YOUR PHYSICIAN OR TAKE YOUR CHILD TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM IMMEDIATELY!

- Increasing drowsiness, mental confusion or difficulty arousing.
- Persistent vomiting, neck stiffness, nausea or fever.
- Difficulty in keeping balance, weakness of the face, arms or legs.
- Blurred or double vision.
- Persistent or more severe headache despite medication.
- Seizures.
- Any other new or worsening symptoms that concern you.

____Your son/daughter will need a physicians release before s/he will be allowed to return to participation in sports.

____Your son/daughter will not need a physicians release before s/he will be allowed to return to participation in sports.

Sue Athletic Trainer
Head Athletic Trainer
555-555-5555 x555

Immediate Injury Care

The following treatment is recommended for soft tissue injuries including, sprains, muscle strains and contusions (bruises):

Rest – Stay off or do not use the area for 1-2 days.

Ice – 10-20” directly to the injured area. Repeat every hour.

Compression – Wrap the area with an ACE wrap, loosening as you near the heart.

Elevation – Elevate the area above the heart to reduce swelling.

- Avoid heat. Heat will increase swelling, thereby increasing pain.
- Unless you have sensitivity to cold it is okay to apply the ice directly to the skin.
- Begin simple range of motion exercises after icing.
- Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen.
- If you seek medical attention notify the athletic trainer.
- If you seek medical attention a written release from the doctor must be presented to the athletic trainer before you can return to participation.

APPENDIX E

Sample Policies and Procedures

Table of Contents
Statement of Purpose

Section I - Regulations Governing the Certified Athletic Trainer
NATA Regulations
State Regulations
CPR Certification
Other Certifications

Section II - Athletic Trainer Job Descriptions
Head Athletic Trainer
Assistant Athletic Trainer
Adult Sports Medicine Assistant (Non-certified)
College Practicum/Intern Student Athletic Trainer (NATA Certified or Non-certified)
Athletic Training Student Aides

Section III - Athletic Trainer Evaluation
Evaluation Procedure (Head Athletic Trainer)
Evaluation Procedure (Assistant Athletic Trainer)
Evaluation Instrument for Head Athletic Trainers (*Appendix A1*)
Evaluation Instrument for Assistant Athletic Trainers (*Appendix A2*)

Section IV - Team Physicians
Roles and Responsibilities
Standing Orders
Team Physician Standing Orders Form (*Appendix B*)

Section V - Coverage of Athletic Contests and Practices
Varsity football
Junior Varsity and/or B-team football
Other home contest coverage
Practice coverage
Coverage of athletic events during scheduled school holidays

Section VI – Athletic Training Room Policies, Procedures and Facilities
Athletic Training Room Rules
Athletic Training Room Facility Guidelines
Return to Play Guidelines
Examination of Opposite Sex Student Athletes
Over-the-Counter Medications
Inhalers
Emergency Insect Sting Kits

Section VII - Emergency Procedures and Transportation Policy for Injured Student Athletes
The Emergency Plan
Basic Emergency Equipment
Transporting the Ill or Injured Student Athlete

Section VIII - Documentation and Record Keeping
Student Athlete Records
Athletic Training Room Records
Regular Reporting

Section IX — Weather and Lightning Guidelines
Severe Weather and Lightning Guidelines
Severe Heat Guidelines
Heat Index
Severe cold guidelines

Policies and Procedures – What to Include

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide *general* guidelines, with minimum standards, for Certified Athletic Trainers employed by the *school district*. Each Certified Athletic Trainer is encouraged to work with his/her principal, athletic director, team physician(s), coaching staff and other appropriate personnel to establish additional guidelines for their particular school.

This document does *NOT* replace any previous written procedures pertaining to Certified Athletic Trainers in the *school district*. Rather it is intended to serve as an updated version of earlier manuals. Earlier procedure manuals should be kept on file and used as supplements to these guidelines.

Statement of Purpose

Why is this document important?

Section I - Regulations Governing the Certified Athletic Trainer

What are the various regulations for practicing as an athletic trainer in your state

Section II - Athletic Trainer Job Descriptions

Specific job descriptions for any of the following that may work in your program should be included in the document:

- Head Athletic Trainer
- Assistant Athletic Trainer
- Adult Sports Medicine Assistant (Non-certified)
- College Practicum/Intern Student Athletic Trainer (NATA Certified or Non-certified)
- Athletic Training Student Aides

Section III - Athletic Trainer Evaluation

What will the evaluation procedure be for each of the following:

- Head Athletic Trainer
- Assistant Athletic Trainer
- College Practicum/Intern Student Athletic Trainer
- Athletic Training Student Aides

Section IV - Team Physicians

Roles and Responsibilities

Standing Orders, include copy of any Standing Order form you may use

Section V - Coverage of Athletic Contests and Practices

Outlined in the section should be what contests and practices you are or will be responsible for covering during the school year, during vacation periods, etc.

Section VI – Athletic Training Room Policies, Procedures and Facilities
Included in this section should be information pertaining to the following:

- Athletic Training Room Rules
- Athletic Training Room Facility Guidelines
- Return to Play Guidelines
- Examination of Opposite Sex Student Athletes
- Use of Over-the-Counter Medications
- Use of Prescribed Inhalers
- Use of Prescribed Emergency Insect Sting Kits

Section VII - Emergency Procedures and Transportation Policy for Injured Student Athletes

This section should include:

- The Emergency Plan
- A listing of basic emergency equipment that the AT should have available to them at the school
- Detailed instructions on policies concerning the transport of ill or injured student athletes

Section VIII - Documentation and Record Keeping

Included here should be detailed information procedures for establishing and maintaining:

- Student Athlete Records
- Athletic Training Room Records
- Methods for Reporting Athletic Training Room Activities

Section IX — Weather and Lightning Guidelines

This portion of the document should contain information on policies and procedures pertaining to:

- Severe Weather and Lightning
- Severe Heat
- Including the heat index
- Severe cold guidelines
- Including the wind chill index

APPENDIX F
Sample Proposals for Additional Staff

Category	Number/ratio
Total student enrollment	
Total number of student athletes (includes those student athletes involved in more than one sport)	
Number of male student athletes (includes those student athletes involved in more than one sport)	
Number of female student athletes (includes those student athletes involved in more than one sport)	
Number of sports	
Number of teams	
Number of contests	
Number of home contests	
Number of principals	
Number of athletic directors (including Asst. ADs)	
Number of coaches	
Number of certified athletic trainers	
Ratio of principals to students	
Ratio of athletic directors to student athletes	
Ratio of coaches to student athletes	
Ratio of certified athletic trainers to student athletes	
Sports added since AT hired or A.T. program instituted	
Teams/levels added since AT hired or A.T. program instituted	
Home contests added since AT hired or A.T. program instituted	
Coaches added since AT hired or A.T. program instituted	

Example of cost analysis work table

The figures for this table would be gathered from athletic training room records and the cost of these services if the athlete went outside the school setting to obtain them. The costs of these services are determined by averaging the fees charged by local clinics.

Service provided	Total number	Average cost	Total cost
Initial evaluation	800	\$125.00	\$100,000
Treatment (30 min)	9000	\$75.00	\$675,000
Treatment (60 min)	3000	\$150.00	\$450,000
Treatment (60+ min)	1500	\$200.00	\$300,000
Total cost of services			\$1,525,000

Sample proposal for employment of an additional athletic trainer

The employment of an additional athletic trainer by the _____ School District has been previously discussed with members of the athletic department staff. At the request of the Athletic Director, background information was compiled and other districts contacted in order to assess the feasibility of employing an additional athletic trainer in the _____ School District.

It is my/our opinion that in this district the students and also the community would greatly benefit from the employment of an additional athletic trainer. It is time that _____ School District to be proactive and hire a second athletic trainer for the district.

Therefore, we/ respectfully propose the hiring of an additional athletic trainer by _____ district.

Why should the _____ employ an additional athletic trainer?

1. Improved delivery of health care services

Our district goal of maximizing student participation in all extracurricular activities has increased the demand for athletic health care services. The number of student athletes to be evaluated, treated and taped has risen substantially, while staff and time allotment per period have remained constant. Demands for services during peak times are exceeding the capabilities of one professional.

Today's health care environment has resulted in shorter hospital stays and reduced access to adjunctive service, including private physical therapy. Injured student athletes are now being remanded to my care at an earlier stage of recovery—in most cases 24 hours postoperatively—necessitating the one on one interaction that is required for such a person to have adequate recovery. While this is occurs the other areas in the athletic trainers' job description do not receive adequate attention.

Most sports have evolved to increase physical demands on student athletes, increasing both the frequency and severity of injury and resulting in an increased caseload for the athletic trainer.

Sport seasons have expanded with overlap, necessitating additional hours for the athletic trainer and often events are uncovered.

2. Junior high athletics virtually ignored

Other than partial coverage of Junior High football games and also partial coverage of the Junior High boys' athletic period the student athlete population at the Junior High School is uncovered by an athletic trainer.

In the past two years there have been an equal number of knee injuries of the nature that would require surgical intervention in Junior High athletics as in the High School.

There are no statistics for numbers, type, or severity of injuries at the Junior High School due to lack record keeping, but if I had to guess the number of injuries at that level are at a similar rate as the High School.

3. Better risk management

Simultaneous events (Junior High Football-Volleyball, Softball-Baseball-Track) make adequate health care coverage impossible. When I am not immediately present the coaches, or an athletic training student aide (minors) must make health care decisions.

During peak times and when multiple events are scheduled, it has become increasingly difficult to meet documentation and diligence demands imposed by our contemporary legal climate.

4. Gender issues and coeducational concerns

The employment of an additional athletic trainer will reduce the risks associated with the treatment and examination of athletes of the opposite sex.

There are times when athletes do not feel comfortable sharing medical problems with an athletic trainer of the opposite sex.

If a men's athletic function is taking place simultaneously with a women's athletic function, the men's event is given priority based on injury potential (i.e. — Football over Volleyball) thus leaving our female student athletes uncovered for several events)

Improve quality of Instruction

The educational requirements for student trainers have increased substantially. I have sought to have an athletic training class added to the high school curriculum for the past three years but have been unsuccessful due to the lack of interest from the other students in the school. Daily event coverage and treatment demands have made education of the student trainer very difficult. Preparations for practices, event coverage, tutorial sessions and injury management create an unending flow of interruptions, seriously undermining the ability to give instruction during athletic periods.

Most colleges now require prospective athletic training students to complete formal preparation in sports medicine for consideration to their programs. Additional staff would enhance the instructional capability.

5. Better utilization of health care personnel

Expanded numbers of teams, participants and games, along with overlapping season have resulted in a tremendous demand on the district athletic trainer.

No present provision for event coverage in case of athletic trainer's absence or illness.

Sports, teams, participants and contest totals

Table 1. High School

Sport	Number of teams	Number of participants	Number of contests
Football	3	110	30+
Volleyball	4	45	80+
Cross country-Boys	2	20	10
Cross country-Girls	1	10	10
Basketball-Boys	3	45-50	80
Basketball-Girls	3	45-50	80
Golf-Boys	2	15-20	14
Golf-Girls	1	8	8
Tennis	2	30-40	15
Track-Boys	3	50	20+
Track-Girls	2	20	15+
Baseball	3	50-60	70+
Softball	2	30	45
Drill team	1	20-40	All Year
Cheerleaders	2	30	All Year
Band and flag corp	1	100	Marching Season
Student trainers	1	7	All Contests
Totals	36	635-690**	477+*

*These coverage numbers reflect the total number of contests in these sports. They will vary from year to year based of depth of playoff participation, weather, etc. The athletic trainer is at most home contests barring conflicting events. I also cover junior high football and home junior high track meets.

**These numbers reflect the number of participants in each sport. Some of these athletes participate in multiple sports.

The average sport has between 30 and 70 practices during the course of the season. All sports have preseason and post season practice every day during one of the three athletic periods.

Table 2. Junior High School

Sport	Number of teams	Number of participants	Number of contests
Football	4	100	32
Volleyball	5	65-70	80+
Basketball-Girls	4	50	70+
Basketball-Boys	6	85	80+
Tennis	4	50-60	6
Track-Boys	2	50	6
Track-Girls	2	20	6
Cheerleaders	1	16	All Year
Band and twirlers	1	60	All Year
Total	29	496-511**	280+

Presently the only junior high athletic events that are covered are the A team football home games and any track meet held at bulldog stadium. I also am available at the junior high for the first 20 minutes of boy's athletic period.

**These numbers reflect the number of participants in each sport. Some of these athletes participate in multiple sports.

**TIME COMMITMENT FOR (School District) ATHLETIC TRAINER
AVERAGE HOURS PER WEEK PER ATHLETIC SEASON**

The following does not include any travel to/from playoff games.

August through November (Football, Volleyball, Cross Country, Jr. High Football, all other sports off-season)

Monday 7 a.m. — 7 p.m.
 Tuesday 7 a.m. — 9:30 p.m. (Volleyball/Jr. High Football)
 Wednesday 7 a.m. — 6:30 p.m.
 Thursday 7 a.m. — 10 p.m. (Sub-varsity football)
 Friday 7 a.m. — Midnight (Varsity Football)
 Saturday 8 a.m. — 11 a.m. (Morning treatments)

*All day for volleyball tournament

Average 68 hours per week

November through February (boys and girls basketball, after-school track, off-season for all other sports)

Monday 7 a.m. — 6 p.m.
 Tuesday 7 a.m. — 10 p.m. (Basketball game)
 Wednesday 7 a.m. — 6 p.m.
 Thursday 7 a.m. — 6 p.m.
 Friday 7 a.m. — 10 p.m. (Basketball game)

Average 63 hours per week

February through May (baseball, softball, track, tennis, golf, all other sports off-season)

Monday 7 a.m. — 8 p.m. (Freshman Baseball)

Tuesday 7 a.m. — 9:30 p.m. (Baseball or Softball)
Wednesday 7 a.m. — 6 p.m.
Thursday 7 a.m. — 6 p.m. (Later if baseball or softball tournament)
Friday 7 a.m. — 9:30 p.m. (Baseball or Softball)
Average 64 hours per week, up to 75 to 80 if there is a tournament

June and July

Usually at school a couple of days per week preparing for upcoming season by storing new supplies, inputting physicals, etc.

Open weight room in evening one week during coaching school.

STUDENT STAFF RATIOS

Number of Students enrolled at _____ High School 720

Number of Athletes at _____ High School 690

(This number includes student athletes participating in more than one sport)

Number of Male athletes at _____ High School 381

(This number includes those student athletes participating in more than one sport)

Number of Female athletes at _____ High School 309

(This number includes those student athletes participating in more than one sport)

Principals at _____ High School 3

Counselors at _____ High School 3

Teachers at _____ High School 55

Coaches at _____ High School (Males 11 — Females 8) 19

Athletic Trainers at _____ High School 1

Student/Principal ratio 236/1

Student/Counselor ratio 236/1

Student/Teacher ratio 13/1

Male student athlete/Male Coach ratio 20/1

Female student athlete/Female Coach ratio 17/1

All student athletes/Athletic Trainer ratio 690/1

(student athletes counted for multiple Sports)

All student athletes/Athletic Trainer ratio 354/1

(student athletes counted only one time)

Economic Impact of Athletic Trainer On Our Community and School District

Since the beginning of high school football practice in the fall of 1998 the _____ High School Athletic Training staff has performed close to 1,000 treatments. These treatments are administered before school, during tutorials, during athletic periods, during lunch, after school, after practice and on Saturdays. If these treatments were administered by outside providers at an average cost of \$75.00 per treatment (a VERY conservative figure), it would cost the taxpayers and insurance companies approximately \$75,000. There is no way of knowing how much money is saved in visits to physicians that were avoided due to the presence of the Athletic Trainer.

Duties of the Athletic Trainer at _____ School District

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
- Valid Teachers Certificate
- Licensed as an Athletic Trainer by the State Board of (insert applicable board or entity here)
- National Athletic Trainer's Association Board of Certification Certified

REPORTS TO: Director of Athletics, High School Principal, Superintendent

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

The athletic trainer's responsibilities are varied. These responsibilities are not confined to first aid and rehabilitation alone. They ramify into a number of areas in which he has specific duties, including the following:

- Be present at all varsity and sub-varsity high school athletic contests on or around campus.
- Be present at Junior High football games after High School football practice has completed.
- Advise senior and junior high school coaching staffs in the conditioning of their student athletes.
- Evaluate and care for injured student athletes. Communicate with parents, physicians, or hospitals as indicated.
- Implement the following, in cooperation with team physician(s), district personnel and local health care providers:
 - Management of acute injury or illness to athlete
 - Rehabilitation procedures
 - Operation of therapeutic devices and equipment
 - Application of braces, guards, tape and other devices
 - Referrals to physicians, health services and hospitals
 - Documentation of athletic training services
 - Coordination of annual athletic physicals

Supervise athletic training room operations, including requisition and storage of supplies and equipment, maintaining an inventory and preparing an annual budget.

- Supervise and instruct athletic training student aides
- Counsel student athletes and coaches on matters pertaining to promotion of healthful life styles.
- Assist in the completion of athletic injury insurance claims.
- Maintain appropriate medical records on all student athletes.
- Maintain continuing professional education.
- Serve as a liaison to the community on athletic health care matters.
- Perform other duties not specifically stated herein but essential to the total team concept of athletic health care.

Additional Athletic Trainer Survey

The results contained in the above chart were compiled partially from a 1996 survey and partially from research done in the fall of 1999. In the 1996 survey one hundred forty three schools were surveyed from sixty-one school districts in the state of Texas. Of those schools, one hundred thirty nine schools returned their survey, which was a response rate of 97.2%. One hundred seventeen of the schools are in the 5A classification. Eighteen of the schools were in the 4A classification.

Among the respondents, seventy-one of these schools employ two athletic trainers (49.6%). Of this number sixty-four are 5A schools and seven are 4A schools. In addition there are thirty-six other schools that were considering employing an additional athletic trainer (25%). Those two groups combined to make a response rate of almost 75% of the schools surveyed either employed two athletic trainers, or were considering doing so.

Another area that was included in the survey was the teaching load of the athletic trainers. Among the schools responding twenty schools have two athletic trainers on campus that do not teach classes, but are available for all athletic periods during the day. Five schools stated that their head athletic trainer does not teach academic classes, but their additional trainer does. Three schools responding stated that their head athletic trainer taught academic classes, but their additional trainer does not. Forty-three schools responded that both of their athletic trainers taught academic classes, in addition to covering athletic periods.

In the chart on pages the schools classified as 5A had their numbers averaged and placed into one entry. The school districts similar to _____ I.S.D. were placed in the chart. These are the schools that fall into the 4A and 3A classification.

APPENDIX G

Bibliography

Almquist J. et al., NATA Position Improvement Guide (1998)

Almquist J et al., The Position Proposal Guide for the Secondary School Athletic Trainer. Dallas, TX, National Athletic Trainers' Association, (1999)

Berry J: Showing our value in dollars and cents. NATA News, June 1993.

Covey SR: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change. New York, NY, 1989, Fireside Books/Simon and Shuster.

Independent Public School District of Boise City: Salary Schedule for Certified Employees, 2002.

Lyznicki JCH: Certified athletic trainers in secondary schools: Report of the Council on Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association. J Athletic Training 1999;34: 272-276.

MapQuest.com (2003). 2003.

Powell J, Barber-Foss K: Injury Patterns in Selected High School Sports: A Review of the 1995-1997 Seasons. Journal of Athletic Training, Sept. 1999, Vol. 34 (3), pp 277-284.

Ray R: Management Strategies in Athletic Training. Champagne, IL, Human Kinetics, 1994.

Comstock D, Collins C & Currie D: National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study, 2013

Other Suggested Reading

Covey SR, Merrill AR, Merrill RR: First Things First: To Live, to Love, to Learn, to Leave a Legacy. New York, NY, 1994, Fireside Books/Simon and Shuster.

Johnson S: Who Moved My Cheese? New York, NY, GP Putnam's Sons, 1998.

Smith HW: The 10 Natural Laws of Successful Time and Life Management: Proven Strategies for Increased Productivity and Inner Peace. New York, NY, Warner Books, 1994.

Almquist J, Carroll M: High School Budget Cuts: What Can ATs Do To Keep Their Program, NATA News, May 2003 pp46-47

Inter-Association Consensus Statement on Best Practices for Sports Medicine Management for Secondary Schools and Colleges <http://www.nata.org/sports-medicine-management>